Self-Perception in *Paradise Lost*

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements

of

Master of Arts in English

in the

University of Canterbury

by

Nicola Learmonth

University of Canterbury

2001

For Matty
with love.

Abstract

Milton's God can derive satisfaction from relationships with the Son, the angels and Man, and hold these creatures accountable for maintaining this union only if he allows them free choice. Creatures demonstrate their love and obedience, and so maintain their relationships with God, by choosing to carry out the divine will. The choice either to maintain or break union with God must be deliberate, and involve an internal process if that creature is to be free and held accountable for their actions. The intellectual faculties of reason, will, and self-perception enable created beings to exercise their freedom consciously. All free agents must apply their self-knowledge to comprehend and fulfil their respective roles in Creation. An accurate creaturely self-perception involves creatures knowing their identity and nature; understanding the limits of their power to act; appreciating God as the source of their existence and their power to act; and recognising their places and roles in the divine order. Self-understanding is connected to happiness and together these form an appreciation that motivates free agents to establish and continue their alliances with God. The Son, Satan, Adam and Eve all behave in accordance with the way they understand themselves. The Son's selfless obedience to God is motivated by his appreciation for God as his Maker, and his perception of his role in the divine order as the physical manifestation of God's will. This frees the Son to pursue his desire to promote the divine purpose without consideration for himself. Inaccurate self-perception is self-deception, allowing creatures to believe that their happiness consists in independence from God. Satan deceives himself into believing that he can be God's adversary and that opposition to God is a realistic possibility.

Adam's and Eve's individual acts of disobedience are the result of a gradually developing inaccuracy in their self-perception. Adam comes to believe that Eve is the source of his happiness, and this misconception is confounded with his fear of solitude. He disobeys God after allowing his immoderate love for Eve to become a higher priority than his relationship with God. Eve's self-perception is confused when she becomes aware of a disparity between her husband's assessment of her and her own understanding of herself because hitherto Adam has been her primary source of knowledge about God, Creation, and her being. The Serpent inspires a sense of injured merit that corresponds with Eve's impression that Adam judged her unfairly. She disobeys God's law because she comes to believe that obeying God impedes her happiness. These creatures behave in accordance with the way they understand themselves, and can make righteous choices by applying their reason in conjunction with their self-knowledge.

Contents

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my supervisors, Gordon Spence and Bill Walker. During our meetings, Gordon challenged and strengthened my reading of *Paradise Lost* with his astute questions. Bill Walker's fiery lectures on Satan were an inspiring introduction to the poem. And Sam Gill's involvement in this work has been invaluable; from discussions on the nature of the Son to the necessity of a comma, Sam has offered me volumes of advice, encouragement and enthusiasm. My friends and family have also given me vast amounts of love and support over the last few years. In particular, I would like to thank my parents, Neil and Margaret Learmonth, for the emotional and financial support they have given, and Chris Bell for her coffee and her unshakable faith. And finally, I would like to mention my partner Chris Turnbull. A supportive friend and a relentless thinker, Chris put down the *New Scientist* to read and talk about *Paradise Lost* with me. Thank you.

N.

Introduction

Milton's God states that the created characters in *Paradise Lost*[1] must have free will if they are to establish a meaningful and sincere relationship with him: "Not free, what proof could they have giv'n sincere / Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love, / Where only what they needs must do, appear'd, / Not what they would?" (III.102-106). Contrary to William Empson's reading of God as manipulative, calculating and interfering, "like Uncle Joe Stalin" (146), Milton's God can derive satisfaction from relationships with the Son, the angels and Man, and hold these creatures accountable for maintaining this union only if he allows them free choice. Heavenly creatures demonstrate their love and obedience, and so maintain their relationships with God, by witnessing and celebrating divine action, and by carrying out the divine will. Adam and Eve show their love and obedience to God by choosing to adhere to his command not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Inseparable from creaturely freedom are the intellectual faculties of reason, will, and a basic knowledge of their positions in the universe, enabling created beings to exercise their freedom consciously. Critics like Millicent Bell, E.W.M. Tillyard, and A.J.A. Waldock recognise a relationship between mental deterioration and alienation from God, but claim either that the deterioration is an aspect of that

---

[1] Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. London: Penguin Books, 1968. All future references are to this edition unless stated otherwise.

creature's character,[2] or else that it is evidence that the creature's mind has become perverted as a result of embracing sin.[3] Stanley Fish interprets the degradation of Satan's "character" as resulting from his will to be independent of God, who, he explains, is "a fixed reference.... Apart from God there can be no stability and no true, that is internally consistent, self" (337). However, Fish also maintains that although reason contributes to Man's continued obedience, the prohibition is a test of faith, rather than reason, and that faith can exist independently of reason (242-243, 270). C.S. Lewis more correctly describes the intellectual corrosion that is evident in disobedient creatures as "a consequence of... rebellion" (94). Disobedience undermines the rationale behind creatures' motives for action, and so their intellectual coherence: "a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers – including even his power to revolt.... It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower" (94). Lewis asserts that obedience to God is fulfilling for angels (and presumably for Man too) because, he says, they share the same nature that is "happy when it adheres to God" (66). So for Lewis, a created being must obey God in order to preserve both happiness and intellectual viability.

For the Son and the angels, knowing their place and role in God's order is part of their intuitive knowledge, and is supported by the divine presence. Man learns discursively, but is created with an inherent curiosity about his origins. Adam and Eve inquire about and learn of the process of their existence and their respective places in Eden through discourse with another: Adam converses with the Word, and Eve, with

[2] Bell (862), Waldock (61).

Adam. They are made aware of the process of their existence, their respective places and roles in Creation, and about the importance of their relationship with God. From these first conversations, and through Raphael, Adam and Eve also learn that not all knowledge is available to them. George Musacchio understands this to mean that Adam and Eve should govern their desires for knowledge "with temperance" (86). He discusses temperance in moral terms, but does not define the "proper limits" of human knowledge any further (86-88). However, from Raphael's explanation it becomes apparent that motivation distinguishes these two types of intellectual inquiry. Knowledge that is sought to increase a creature's appreciation of God strengthens this relationship and enhances that creature's self-understanding. Raphael encourages Adam and Eve to pursue this type of learning. Musacchio states that part of Adam's and Eve's "learning processes" involves "sinless errors", by which he means that errors that do not compromise Adam's and Eve's obedience to God can be instructive, allowing them to learn and develop (73-76). Coinciding with this idea, Diane Benet notes that both Adam and Eve identify with figures from Raphael's narrative, each adopting their respective hero as a model for their own behaviour (91). Raphael warns the Edenic pair against knowledge for its own sake, explaining that learning that does not intensify their appreciation of God as the Maker is redundant and potentially detrimental to their relationship with God. The narrator condemns the philosophising of the fallen angels for this reason, explaining that it is "Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy" (II.565) because they debate to avoid thinking about their alienation from God (II.555-569). Raphael explains to Adam and Eve that their questions about the

---

[3] Tillyard, 262.

stars and the proportions of the heavens are inappropriate; these speculations cannot enhance their appreciation of God because their creaturely comprehension cannot equal God's omniscience (IV.657-658, VIII.15-38).

Fish denies that Adam's and Eve's behaviour is influenced by their earlier experiences. Rejecting all possibility of antecedents, Fish argues that if their decision to disobey God is to be free, then it must be spontaneous and without internal or external causation: "If the Fall is explained or 'understood' *it is no longer free*, but the result of some analysable 'process' which attracts to itself a part of the guilt. Thus freedom of will is denied, the obloquy of the action returns to God (who sets the process in motion), and again reason - the reader's reason - has given law to God." (256-257, emphasis added). But Fish's hypothesis that the fall is an "incomprehensible phenomenon" (228) that cannot be explained (259) deprives Adam and Eve of responsibility for their actions by divorcing them from conscious thought that is necessary to deliberation and decision making. The choice to break union with God must be deliberate, and the internal process leading up to disobedience must be "analysable", if that creature is to be free and held accountable for their actions. Musacchio recognises the significance of the development of self-knowledge as the connection between free will and God's justice. He explains that Adam and Eve "must freely choose their sinful actions" (2), and argues that the earlier episodes provide a "plausible internal motivation of the Fall" (8). Musacchio eventually concludes that Eve is motivated to sin because she is deceived by the Serpent and the fruit arouses her appetite, and Adam, because of his "vehement love for Eve" (173).

Unfortunately, Musacchio does not develop these ideas. He does not discuss the impact these motives have on Adam's and Eve's self-perceptions, nor does he consider how these motives affect the pair's understanding of their relationship with God before they disobey.

Adam's and Eve's knowledge of the divine order becomes understanding when they apply it, either in practice or conceptually, to another situation. Eve selects Abdiel as a model for her behaviour because he resists peer pressure to revolt against God. Abdiel demonstrates a development in his knowledge to understanding when, after witnessing the Son's appointment as God's vicegerent and head of the angels, he rejects Satan's interpretation of the event as evidence that the divine godhead is tyrannical and oppressive in favour of his own interpretation of the Son's appointment as a positive elevation for the angels. Free agents must apply their self-knowledge to comprehend and fulfil their respective roles in Creation. An accurate creaturely self-perception, for the Son, the angels, and Man, involves them knowing their identity and nature; understanding the limits of their power to act; appreciating God as the source of their existence and their power to act; and recognising their places and roles in the divine order.

Although happiness is clearly a significant concept in *Paradise Lost*, critics do not explore or discuss the implications of it fully. Lewis recognises a correlation between a being's fulfilment of its role in God's order and creaturely happiness. He says: "The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferior" (72). Fish defines happiness as "the

psychological peace of being allied to the source of goodness" (333). Yet, happiness is part of every creature's original condition because their positions in the divine order exactly suit their natures. For the Son, the angels, and Adam and Eve, happiness is threefold. These creatures recognise that they are happy, they attribute this happiness to God as the source of their happiness, and they continue their happiness by maintaining their relationship with God (VII.625-632, V.520-522). Self-understanding is connected to happiness and together these form an appreciation that motivates free agents to establish alliances with God. These creatures behave in accordance with the way they understand themselves, and make righteous choices by applying their reason in conjunction with their self-knowledge. A creature's potential to fall is influenced by that creature's self-perception.

Self-perception motivates the conduct of the Son, Satan, Adam and Eve. All these characters behave in accordance with the way they understand themselves. The Son's selfless obedience to God is motivated by his appreciation for God as his Maker, and his perception of his role in the divine order as the physical manifestation of God's will. The Son demonstrates through his actions that, of all the creatures in the poem, he has the most accurate perception of self. This exceptionally accurate self-perception frees the Son to pursue his desire to promote the divine purpose without consideration for himself. Satan, on the other hand, deceives himself into believing that he can be God's adversary and that opposition to God is a realistic possibility. Satan desires God's power, and thinks that it is transferable. Satan's ideas are not supported by the poem; rather, they are a necessary basis for his revolt. And

Adam breaks union with God after allowing his immoderate love for Eve to become a higher priority than his relationship with God. In spite of guidance to the contrary, Adam comes to believe that Eve is the source of his happiness, and this inaccurate belief is confounded with his fear of solitude. Adam fears losing Eve, allows his excessive love for her to compromise his reasoning, and eventually esteems his relationship with Eve as a higher priority than his devotion to God. Eve's understanding of herself is initially correct, but is compromised during the conversation with Adam in Book IX. During this scene, Eve becomes aware of a disparity between her husband's assessment of her and her own perception of herself, and she eventually rejects as defective Adam's accounts of her and their situation in Eden. Eve's self-understanding is confused because hitherto Adam has been her primary source of knowledge about God, Creation, and her being. Her self-perception is further altered by the Serpent's assertions that God's prohibition is unjust and oppressive. The sense of injured merit the Serpent inspires corresponds with Eve's impression that Adam underestimated her and judged her unfairly. Eve accepts and incorporates the Serpent's implicit blasphemy into her self-perception. She disobeys God's law because she comes to believe that obeying God impedes her happiness.

Every creature's conduct is motivated by that creature's self-understanding. All creatures must choose to maintain and develop increasingly comprehensive self-perceptions that enable them to appreciate obedience to God as positive and rewarding. An inaccurate self-perception allows creatures to believe that they deserve and are capable of independence from God. Adam's and Eve's individual acts of

disobedience are the result of their gradually developing inaccuracies in their self-perceptions. The created characters in *Paradise Lost* behave in accordance with the way they understand themselves, and can preserve their relationships with God and their happiness only by maintaining an accurate self-understanding.

Chapter One: The Son

Of all the creatures in *Paradise Lost*, the Son has the most accurate perception of himself. The Son's self-perception comprises his knowledge of who he is; his understanding of the extent and source of his power to act; his idea of his origins; and his place and role in the universe. The theology of the poem, that God is the source of all things, provides a definite actuality against which a creature's self-understanding can be assessed for accuracy. The Son's behaviour in *Paradise Lost* distinguishes him as a creature who has a higher understanding of his Maker, Creation, and himself. His acts of exceptional obedience demonstrate that, of all the creatures in the poem, the Son has the most accurate perception of self.

This exceptionally accurate self-knowledge motivates the Son to behave without consideration for himself in his desire to fulfil the divine will. The most obvious example of his selfless obedience occurs during his first appearance in the poem, in Book III, when God asks that someone volunteer to atone for Man's offence. At the beginning of this scene, God discusses with the Son the circumstances and consequences of the fall of Man. He says either Man must die, or justice must end, unless one of the members of heaven will die for Man, because then the race of Man can be saved from eradication and justice will be served. Addressing all of Heaven, God asks for a volunteer, and the Son distinguishes himself from the angels because he is the only one to respond. The acceptance of God's proposal is "dear" (III.216) for the Son not only because it is made at great personal cost, requiring the temporary surrender to death, but also because it demonstrates an unmatched obedience and love for the Almighty, and for his

works. The proposal will be "dear" for God, too, because in one moment he will sentence to death his "only Son" (V.604); a being who freely offers himself up to the divine will. God has already stated that this type of obedience is what he values most in his creatures: "[the sincere proof] Of true allegiance, constant Faith... [and] Love" (III.104). God asks for one who is both "able, and as willing" (III. 211), and although any one of the angels is "able", only the Son is willing. In the silence that follows God's request, none of the angels can resign himself to such a costly, but optional service. The angels' silence suspends the action of the poem, and the narrative motion is only resumed when the Son speaks. He alone breaks the silence, renewing "His dearest mediation" (III.226). Having already assumed the role of mediator between God and Man in his previous speech, the Son continues that mediation; his faith in the Almighty is so great that in his mind there is no need for him to pause and consider how this service may impact upon him personally. And, although the narrative pauses for the angels, the Son's "dearest mediation" appears to be continuous. His immediate commitment to action implies that serving the divine will is his highest priority. The Son freely chooses to align himself to his Father's will because he perceives himself as the visual manifestation of that will. The Son thinks of himself as his Father's image. This is evident in the Son's later statement that he readily adopts his Father's attitudes towards all creatures and subjects: "whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on / Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on, / Image of thee in all things" (VI.734-736). As soon as he is aware of his Father's will, the Son freely commits himself to it. This is what sets the Son apart from all other creatures.

The opportunity for greater obedience is available to all who hear God's proposal. God's request is addressed not to any specific individual, but to the entire company of heaven. Clearly any one of the angelic host will suffice provided that he fulfils the criteria, namely, that he is free and obedient, and that he freely chooses to die on Man's behalf. The appeal is not made to the Son exclusively:

> [Man] with his whole prosterity must die,
> Die hee or Justice must; unless for him
> *Some other able, and as willing*, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
> Say *Heavenly Powers*, where shall we find such love,
> *Which of ye* will be mortal to redeem
> Man's mortal crime, and just th'unjust to save,
> *Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?* (III. 209-216, emphasis added).

And all who hear God's appeal fit the first criterion, because the only beings who are not free and obedient are the rebel angels, and they have been driven from heaven. The Son's willingness to do what is *not* required of him because he appreciates that he owes his entire existence to God distinguishes him from the rest of heaven. Even among the obedient, there are degrees of willingness, and this depends upon an individual's self-perception. The angels' failure to fulfil God's costly but voluntary will indicates that their desire to exist rivals their love and obedience to God. But for the Son, the single most important fact of his being is that he exists by the will of God. He surrenders his own existence to promote the divine purpose, saying "I for his sake will leave / Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee / Freely put off, and for him lastly die / Well pleas'd, on me let Death wreak all his rage" (III.238-241). And although it is clear from the lines that follow that the Son believes Death will have only a temporary hold over him, the prospect

of ceasing to exist is still formidable, particularly to an immortal, who can otherwise expect an uninterrupted consciousness. And his departure is a great sacrifice in itself, because, in the company of the divine, all creatures experience contentment. The Son says that he is prepared to leave his Father's side because he knows that this action is in accordance with the divine will, and he envisions that this sacrifice will satisfy God: "Thou at the sight / Pleas'd, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile" (III.256-257). Fulfilling the will of the Father is the Son's ultimate goal, being of greater priority than his desire to remain in his Father's presence. The narrator reinforces the idea that the Son's higher obedience is motivated by his self-understanding, describing the Son as "[radiating] immortal love / To mortal men, above which only shone / Filial obedience: as a sacrifice / Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will / Of his great Father" (III.267-271). God sanctions the rightness of the Son's action, and the motives behind his commitment to action when he reaffirms him as his only Son:

> Because thou hast, though Thron'd in highest bliss
> Equal to God, and equally enjoying
> Godlike fruition, quitted all to save
> A World from utter loss, and hast been found
> By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
> Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
> Far more than Great or High; because in thee
> Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
> Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
> With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne (III.305-314).

God approves of his Son's intentions: "in thee / Love hath abounded", and in acclaiming the Son's motives, God also praises his self-knowledge as exemplary. God states that the Son's higher obedience is indicative of a well-founded

appreciation of himself and the divine purpose as deserving priority over the existence of any individual creature. And this leads the Almighty to exalt the Son, in recognition of his merits, all over again.

But this is not to say that the angels' failure to respond to God's appeal is sinful. While their reluctance to convey the divine will is a type of error, it is not sinful because it does not transgress divine law or contradict God's imperative will.[1] As long as the divine will is expressed as a request rather than a command, the angels are free to pass over God's proposal without compromising their individual relationships with him. God asks for a volunteer who is "able, and *as willing*" (III.211, emphasis added). Given this stipulation, it would be a greater offence for an angel to volunteer in spite of his own reservations, because then his actions would be in opposition to God's word. Furthermore, in witnessing the Son's willing sacrifice of his own existence to convey God's will, and his consequent increased contentment, the angels learn all over again that creatures are happy serving God's will. They admire the Son for his greater obedience (III.271-272), and rejoice at the recognition his sacrifice merits (III.344-371). Following God's exaltation of the Son as "universal King" (III.317), the heavenly company bows before the thrones of God and the Son. The angels celebrate the divine authority of the Father, and of the Son through the Father, and "with solemn adoration" (III.351) cast off their own crowns, abasing themselves before the pair. These gestures, particularly the self-abasement, indicate that the angels' desire to

[1] Musacchio explains his definition of sinless error in relation to Adam and Eve: "The perfection of creatures inferior to their Creator is not absolute but relative, not static but growing" (76). And he says that "From the first, they [Adam and Eve] grow in knowledge though trial and error" (75).

fulfil the divine will is no longer challenged by an immoderate desire for self-preservation. The heavenly company's self-abasement is like the Son's "humiliation" (III.313); ultimately it is an opportunity for elevation. Abdiel confronts Satan with a similar concept during their debate. Opposing Satan's accusations, Abdiel claims that the Son's appointment as head of the angels does not lessen the status of the angelic host, but rather, it reflects further glory upon them: "how far from [God's] thought / To make us less, bent rather to exalt / Our happy state under one Head more near / United" (V.828-831). Abdiel believes that these divine intentions are realised: "[the angels are] more illustrious made, since he the Head / One of our number thus reduc't becomes, / His Laws our Laws, all honour to him done / Returns our own" (V.842-845). A created being can find glory by blending with the divine will. The hymn the heavenly host sings to celebrate the Son's exaltation shows that they have developed their perceptions of themselves and re-evaluated their priorities. They have once again matched their own wills with that of the Almighty, and freely choose to absorb themselves in his will.

In accordance with his own self-understanding, the Son aligns his will with that of the divine. Dependence on the divine will gives the Son complete independence because this choice allows him opportunities to contribute to God's objectives, namely, to preserve Creation and maintain divine order. So choosing to be ruled by the Almighty enables the Son to participate in the divine purpose. In the act of accepting God's proposal, the Son begins first by restating God's will for grace. He says "Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace" (III.227), meaning both that God has expressed his will, and that God has pledged his word. Unlike

the angels, the Son desires to obey God's will, irrespective of whether or not that will is articulated as an imperative. God declares that he would like Man to have grace, and for the Son, God's word is mandatory. It is clear that the Son is not questioning the truth of God's word, because he repeats God's word as a fact: "man shall find grace" (III.227). And even when he observes that Man cannot receive grace if he has been surrendered to Death, the Son appears confident that the divine will shall be realised. The Son identifies the necessity of intercession, which is realised as the need for a sacrifice in order to maintain justice, and immediately offers himself as the solution. He says: "[Man, the aid of grace] Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost; / Atonement for himself or offering meet, / Indebted and undone, hath none to bring: / Behold mee then" (III.233-236). The use of 'then' suggests that the Son's offer is consequential of this need that God articulates and that the Son himself observes, rather than of any ulterior motive like the desire for personal glory. The Son's offer is immediate. He comprehends his position in Creation as that of servant of God, and, having identified a task, the Son commits himself to action. He accepts Man's punishment out of filial love, because God asks that someone do so, and because in committing himself to atonement he enables God to grant Man grace:

> [the Son's] meek aspéct
> Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love
> To mortal men, above which only shone
> Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
> Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
> Of his great Father (III.266-271).

It means the preservation of one of God's works and greater glory for God. The Son freely chooses to be the instrument through which God will achieve these

things. The only satisfaction the Son foresees for himself is at the moment of completion when he will return to his Father's side and see on his face "peace" and "reconcilement" (III. 263, 264).

But this is not to say that the Son is so focused on pleasing his Father that he pledges himself to be the saviour of Man without knowing the full implications of his offer. In the exchange which occurs immediately before the Son proposes himself as sacrifice for Man, he exhibits not only a clear understanding of himself and the situation at hand, but also a strong desire to maintain his relationship with God, coupled with a secondary desire to preserve divine order in Creation. After hearing God outline the future fall of Man, the Son is moved to explore God's intentions regarding Man's sentencing, and to speak in favour of grace (III.144-166). He emphasises not only the tragic unjustness of destroying Man in such circumstances, but also the incompatibility of unjustness and destructiveness with God's own integrity:

> should Man
> Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest Son
> Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
> With his own folly? that be from thee far,
> That far be from thee, Father, who art Judge
> Of all things made, and judgest only right (III.150-155).

The Son is not challenging or contradicting the divine sentence, he is exploring it. He seeks clarity between God's two seemingly contradictory sentences for Man. He is not attempting to contradict or influence his Father in any way. God has already ordained that Man shall find grace (III.131). This elucidation is not for the benefit of God, but for the Son himself, and the listening angels. Some critics claim that, in this speech, the Son coerces his Father into giving grace to Man.

Empson reads the exchange as a political trick, staged by God and the Son to impress the listening angels (124). John Peter expresses concerns about what this scene reveals about the divine character, saying that God appears "resentful" (18), "petulant" (12), and "wilfully unpredictable" (12). He says that the Son is merciful by comparison because the Son speaks with the intention of diverting the divine anger away from Man (18, 12). Peter says that "[t]he Son's speech is suasive, as if he has to work on God to prevent him from changing his mind and delivering a sterner sentence.... What troubles us is that the Son should use this tone at all..... If the Son does not know him to be absolutely just and dependable, who can?" (12). But the Father does not disagree with the Son. Rather, he praises his Son's exploration of the apparent contradiction in his sentencing of Man, and his understanding of the divine purpose. God responds to the Son's speech of elucidation approvingly: "'O Son... / ... / ... All hast thou spok'n as my thoughts are, all / As my Eternal purpose hath decreed'" (III.167, 171-172). God asserts the accuracy of the Son's perception of the situation, and the appropriateness of his concerns that the treatment of Man be just. God also states that he is aware of and shares the Son's concerns.

The Son is not, as Empson asserts, "cheated" by the Father. Empson gives two reasons for his claim; first because the Son is not in a position to inquire about pain, and second because the Father deliberately conceals the torturous nature of his Death from him (125-129). The Son is aware of the implications of

accepting Man's punishment. [2] In *The Christian Doctrine* it is claimed that the Son possesses "limited omniscience":

> Omniscience. Matt. Xi. 27. 'all things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' Even the Son, however, knows not all things absolutely; there being some secret purposes, the knowledge of which the Father has reserved to himself alone (964).[3]

Maurice Kelley, in his study of *The Christian Doctrine* as a theological glossary for *Paradise Lost*, maintains that this thesis of limited omniscience corresponds with the representation of the Son in the poem. He quotes two sections from the poem which he says parallel the above excerpt from *The Christian Doctrine*: "Son who art alone / My word, *my wisdom*, and effectual might" (III. 169-170, emphasis added), and "Things not reveal'd which th'invisible King, / Only Omniscient hath suppress in Night" (VII.122-123) (89). Certainly, the Son of *Paradise Lost* exhibits a greater knowledge than any other creature of both present circumstances (he is the only creature to comprehend God's dilemma of justice and mercy for Man) and of future possibilities. The Son heard God say that Man will die unless some other being will "pay / The rigid satisfaction, death for death" (III.211-212). And he clearly understands that the nature of Death is absolute non-existence because he notes that Man will not exist to receive grace if he has already been given over to Death: "[Man] Can never seek [grace], once dead in sins and lost"

---

[2] The Son demonstrates an understanding of death as nonexistence when he asks how Man could receive grace after death. And the Son saw the rebel angels suffering pain in the War in Heaven.

[3] There is a debate concerning the authorship of *The Christian Doctrine,* but I did not become aware of this until after writing this chapter.

(III.232-233). Empson is sceptical of the Son's offer, arguing that his knowledge that his death will be temporary undermines the heroism of his action (124). But, even for a creature like the Son, who has been granted immortality, and knows that he therefore cannot remain dead indefinitely, Death is a fearful prospect. The Son has no personal experience of Death, nor does he know the term of his non-existence. His willing submission to Death will involve the Son relinquishing his position in heaven, and the power he presently wields for his Father. But the most daunting aspect of the Son's sacrifice is his voluntary absence from his Father: "I for his [Man's] sake will leave / Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee / Freely put off" (III.238-240). In spite of Death's awful aspects, the Son's resolve to serve his Father remains unaffected. The Son knows that, although Death is the product of an incestuous union between Satan and Sin, rather than a direct creation of God, and neither Death nor his parents will acknowledge God as the Almighty, Death nevertheless exists and acts by God's will. The Son does not fear Death because he knows that Death exists by the divine will, and serves God's purpose, albeit in ignorance. Observing their approach to Earth, God says "[Death and Sin] know not that I call'd and drew them thither / My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth / Which man's polluting Sin with taint hath shed / On what was pure" (X.629-632). And finally, in offering to be the saviour of Man, the Son foresees that his initial submission to Death will give way to eventual victory, thus demonstrating an awareness of the implications of his decision.

At this moment the Son acts to the advantage of Man, by paying for his offence, and on behalf of God, by carrying out his will, but he also consciously acts for himself, by virtue of his freedom and his readiness to obey. In a later scene

the Son states that "to obey is happiness entire" (VI.741).[4] So, although the proposed submission to Death will be a "dear" sacrifice for the Son, he will find contentment in even this, because he thinks of himself as an instrument of God's will, and this action is in accordance with that will. The situation is just as Fish claims, dependent upon an ideal relationship with the divine; the nature of the Son's relationship with Creation, and Man in particular, is a result of the relationship he has with the Almighty (159).[5] The Son is so intensely aware of his relationship with God that God's will is his highest priority and the source of his every word and move. The narrator observes that the Son readily volunteers himself to die in Man's stead, because he knows that this is God's will (III.269-271). Lewis comments that all of Milton's angels have the same nature; "happy when it adheres to God and miserable when it adheres to itself" (66). Fulfilling the divine will brings happiness to all creatures that have free agency. Raphael informs Adam that Man's happiness is dependent upon him maintaining an appropriate relationship with God, and that he can achieve this by obeying the divine will: "That thou art happy, owe to God, / That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself, / That is, to thy obedience" (V.520-522). And the Son is no exception to this. For

---

[4] This statement sums up the concept of threefold happiness, first defined by the angelic host in their hymn celebrating Creation (VII.625-632), and later explained to Adam by Raphael (V.520-522). Evidently the Son understands the concept of threefold happiness in essence, although he does not analyse the concept explicitly. For a more detailed discussion of the concept of threefold happiness, see below (68, 110).

[5] "In Milton's monistic universe, where 'all things are of God' (*de deo*), a sin against the source is a sin against all. A proper sense of one's relationship to God will yield a proper attitude toward everything that flows from him, since all relationships and the values embodied in them depend on his sustaining power. To turn away from God is to turn away from all values and to default on all obligations, whether they be racial, political or familial" (159).

the Son, the knowledge that his conduct satisfies the will of his Father provides sufficient gratification. In Book VI, having heard of his intended role as victor in the War in Heaven, the Son tells his Father that he is content when he knows that his actions have satisfied the Father: "this I my Glory account, / My exaltation, and my whole delight, / That thou in me well-pleas'd, declar'st thy will / Fulfill'd, which to fulfill is all my bliss" (VI.726-729). Like all creatures that have free agency, the Son's happiness is dependent upon his obedience to the divine will, and it is due to his exceptional awareness of this fact that his obedience is exemplary.

The Son finds the rebellion of Satan and his followers incomprehensible because he cannot understand how any creature could choose to disobey the divine will, and consequently choose to break union with God. The Son knows that, for a created being, maintaining this relationship with the Almighty is fulfilling, but not demanding. He assures his Father that "Arm'd with thy might, [I will soon] rid Heav'n of these rebell'd [angels], / ... / That from thy just obedience could revolt, / Whom to obey is happiness entire" (VI.737, 740-741). The delusions of the rebel angels are conceptually foreign to a being who thinks of himself in the way that the Son does. The Son knows as Satan will not, that obedience to the Maker sets a creature free, that "a grateful mind / By owing owes not, but still pays, at once / Indebted and discharg'd" of that "debt immense of endless gratitude" (IV.55-57, 52). His emotional response to the revolt of the rebel angels can ultimately be characterised as righteous anger. In his warning to Satan and his assembled followers, Abdiel describes the Son's wrath as a fury independent of the Father's: "hast'n to appease / Th'incensed Father, and th'incensed Son" (V.846-847). And

this possibility is further supported by the comments the Son makes as he relieves the faithful angels of their posts. He claims that he is aroused to anger on two counts; he is angry in compliance with the will of his Father, and because the offence is in response to his exaltation. The Son explains that he is taking over from the angels in accordance with God's will, and because "of this cursed crew / The punishment to other hand belongs, / Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints" (VI.806-809). But then the Son's words of divine humility are followed by his claim that the affront is directed at him personally: "not you but mee they have despis'd, / Yet envied; against mee is all their rage, / Because the Father... / ... / Hath honour'd me according to his will" (VI.812-814, 816). The Son regards Satan's revolt as a rejection of him as a model for creaturely self-knowledge and he finds Satan's conduct abhorrent as well as incomprehensible.

Such attitudes do not seem to be characteristic of a being who, in every other way, consciously devotes himself to the divine will. However, this apparent discrepancy between the Son's anger and his self-perception can be resolved by examining the speeches he makes in response to the news of Satan's mutiny and the impending War in Heaven. The Son receives the news of mutiny more earnestly than does his Father, who rightly ridicules the attempt to dethrone an omnipotent power. The Son sees that, although this conspiracy presents no threat to God's authority, it is inspired by, and in part directed at, his appointment as "Vice-gerent" (V.609). Satan's assault is directed at divine obedience. The Son perceives this situation as opportunity for him to demonstrate, in terms these reluctant learners will understand, that he rules for God and wields God's "Regal Power" (V.739) by merit of his extensive obedience. The Son says that "their vain

designs and tumults vain, / [are a] Matter to mee of Glory, whom their hate / Illústrates, when they see all Regal Power / Giv'n me to quell their pride" (V.737-740). The Son wants to quench their rebellion for two reasons; because it is an insult to their Creator, and because he wants to establish his merit of God's appointment as being rooted in his own perception of himself as a servant of the divine will. This gives a new slant to the Son's later statement, that "Vengeance is his, *or whose he sole appoints*" (VI.808, emphasis added). The Son knows that his appointment as vanquisher of the rebel angels is not only because these angels challenge the authority of the divine figurehead, but also because their actions declare that they do not comprehend that a creature's alliance to God is the only form of power: "Therefore to mee their doom he hath assign'd; / ... / ... since by strength / They measure all" (VI.817, 820-821). The Son's anger here is justified because Satan's attack is also levelled at his own obedience to the divine. The Son, who was begotten as the Son of God on the grounds of his own merits, is the best example of a creature who knows that all power is derived from God, and that maintaining a relationship with God is the only viable form of action. Through his appreciation of God as the Maker, the Son is free, and, in acknowledgment of his higher obedience, he is lent omnipotence by his Father and given responsibilities like the routing of the rebel angels. The Son is chosen to chase the rebels from heaven not only because the offence was in response to his exaltation, and is in part directed at him, but also because, of all Creation, he has the most appropriate sense of self, making him an embodiment of divine love and obedience.

This aspect of the Son's appointment as the Son of God, his meriting this recognition through his self-perception and his higher obedience, features

significantly in his victory over the rebellious angels. When faced with divine obedience, manifested as righteous rage, the malcontents offer no resistance; they can only flee. Ironically, even the freedom to choose how they will respond to the various forms of divine defence is now removed from the control of the rebellious angels. It is God, rather than Satan or his followers, who determines the degree of resistance they offer against first the angelic host, and then the Son. Having allowed the angelic war to continue without divine intervention for two days, God turns to his Son and says:

> Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
> For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far
> Have suffer'd, that the Glory may be thine
> Of ending this great War, since none but Thou
> Can end it. Into thee such Virtue and Grace
> Immense I have transfus'd, that all may know
> In Heav'n and Hell thy Power above compare,
> And this perverse Commotion govern'd thus,
> To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
> Of all things, to be Heir and to be King
> By Sacred Unction, thy deserved right (VI.699-709).

Following their decision to oppose God, Satan and his company are deprived of all freedom to act. The War in Heaven is only permitted to eventuate because God wants to make the Son's appointment as vicegerent explicit to all. When the Son drives the treacherous angels from heaven, there is no evidence in their response, of the type of force they were allowed to exert in the War in Heaven.

But the flight of the rebels is in some ways surprising, because events prior to this scene seem to anticipate a forceful confrontation. Satan describes the

Son as a second malevolent tyrant, and slanderously claims that his appointment as head of the angels will impact upon their liberty:

> by Decree
> Another now hath to himself engross't
> All Power, and us eclipst under the name
> Of King anointed...
> .....
> ... to receive from us
> Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
> .....
> Who can in reason then or right assume
> Monarchy over such as live by right
> His equals, if in power and splendor less,
> In freedom equal? or can introduce
> Law and Edíct on us, who without law
> Err not, much less for this to be our Lord,
> And look for adoration to th'abuse
> Of those Imperial Titles which assert
> Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve? (V.774-777, 781-782, and 794-802).

Then Abdiel, intending to defend the Son from Satan's accusations, implies that the Son will respond to their attack, and warns the rebels against "tempt[ing]" "th'incensed Son" (V.845, 847). Abdiel describes the Son as "an Iron Rod to bruise and break [the disobedient angels]" (V.887). And his concern that the Son, blinded with fury, may mistakenly destroy him along with the disobedient angels reinforces the expectation that heaven's response to this insurrection will take the form of force. This prediction seems to be echoed by the Son himself when he states his intention to instruct the traitors in terms they will understand. He says that "they may have their wish, to try with mee / In Battle which the stronger proves, they all, / Or I alone against them, since by strength / They measure all"

(VI.818-821). These statements seem to anticipate the Son asserting his rule by force. But the joke is on the rebels, who "by strength measure all". The Son demonstrates to the rebels that force is not a viable form of opposition to the divine will. The actual encounter between the Son and the rebellious angels does not at all resemble the individual combats of the War in Heaven because there is no contest; it is barely a confrontation. The Son appears to do very little, and we are told that, although the dissident angels are vanquished entirely, the Son does not draw on even half of the strength available to him (VI.853-856). His battle stance consists mainly of 'seeing' and 'being seen'. Before setting off to meet Satan and his followers, the Son assumes a visage of righteous anger, making himself fearful to look upon. His Chariot of Paternal Deity is studded with eyes that "[glare] lightening" and "[shoot] pernicious fire" at the treacherous angels (VI.848-849). The wings of the four cherubim accompanying him are similarly studded with eyes. The Son charges at the unrepentant rebels and sends thunderbolts "such as in their Souls infix'd / Plagues" (VI.837-838). The thunderbolts cause wounds that are not physical but spiritual, like those already marring the souls of the rebel angels. Filled with shame, Satan and his rebels can offer no resistance to the Son's righteous anger, wishing only to hide from it. Under the gazes of the many eyes of the Chariot of Paternal Deity, and the eyes on the wings of the four cherubim, Satan and his legions lose their strength and their desire to fight. The Son overwhelms the force of the rebel angels, not with violence, but with his exceptional understanding of himself that is the basis for his obedience. The resolve of Satan and his disobedient angels fails when confronted by the Son's alignment with the Father, which is manifested at this moment as righteous anger,

and the many eyes of the Chariot of the Paternal Deity. Their desire for action is undermined by the Son's very presence. The Son's devotion to the omnipotent Father highlights to the disobedient angels, not only the inconsistencies in their own self-perceptions, but also the absurdity of their conduct, thus exposing them to shame.

Although we rarely see the Son deliberate with himself, this is evidence not of a lack of self-awareness, but of a greater understanding of himself. As can be observed from his participation in the War in Heaven, the Son does not need to stop and consider his own position in relation to a proposed form of action before committing himself to that act. The Son understands himself and his position in Creation well enough; he already knows that he wants to serve the Almighty and, before committing himself to action, he needs only to be made aware of the divine will. In Book III, the Son knowingly offers himself to die in Man's stead, but is aware that, although vulnerable to Death, his submission will be temporary due to the immortality granted him by the Almighty. The other created characters in *Paradise Lost*, namely Satan, all the Angels and Man, do pause and think about a proposed form of action and how it will affect their situation. This is because these characters do not easily comprehend their position in the universe, nor is their source of being clear to them as it is to the Son. Although initially sufficient to stand (III.99), creaturely self-perception is fallible, and must not only be maintained, but also developed, if these creatures are to reach a higher level of perfection. The Son's self-understanding is exceptional in that it surpasses the basic requirements for maintaining his alliance with God. But this degree of perfect self-understanding is available to other creatures also. Raphael, citing God,

says that heaven could one day be available to Man: "by degrees of merit rais'd / They [can] open to themselves at length the way / Up hither, under long obedience tri'd" (VII.157-159). Hugh MacCallum observes that the Son, "like all other creatures but the helplessly lost, [is] in a process of growth and education. The successive acts of obedience which from one point of view are the steps leading down to his humiliation in the form of man can also be seen as the stages by which he proves his title as Son of God" (84). And these "successive acts of obedience" can also be seen as evidence of the continued development of the Son's perfection. His selfless behaviour reflects a sense of self that is grounded on an understanding of his origins and his power to act as being derived from God:

> Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume,
> And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
> Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee
> For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov'st:
> But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
> Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
> Image of thee in all things (VI.730-736).

Fish says that, because all things are of God, there is ultimately only one value, and that value is "maintaining an alliance [with God]" (333). If this is so, then the Son's perception of himself is the most accurate of all the created characters in the poem because he alone holds nothing of himself in reserve from his alliance with God. The Son is aware that he owes the fact of his continued existence to God, and so his own sense of identity is not an alternative priority to his serving God, it is the reason he freely obeys. Fish observes that for the creatures in *Paradise Lost*, "happiness is the psychological peace of being allied to the source of goodness", God being "the source of all values" (333). Satan admits as much when, addressing

himself, he says, "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell", because "against his thy will / Chose freely what it now so justly rues" (IV.75, 71-72). And this idea that a creature's happiness is connected with his relationship to God is echoed by the Son, who states that "to obey [God] is happiness entire" (VI.741). The Son knows that he is happiest when serving the divine will.

After his triumph over Satan and his followers, the Son returns quietly, and takes his place beside the Almighty without speaking. In spite of the angels' "loud acclaim" (III.397), he remains silent and does not respond to the angelic celebration of his victory in any way. The Son does not receive the divine acknowledgment for his success that Abdiel's loyalty earns him in Book VI: "'Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought / The better fight, who single hast maintain'd / Against revolted multitudes the Cause / Of Truth'" (VI.29-32). The Son's deed receives no immediate comment from the Almighty, nor is one sought. This reserved behaviour is typical of the Son. His return from creating the Earth and Man is similarly low key: "at the holy mount / Of Heav'n's high-seated top, th'Imperial Throne / Of Godhead... / The Filial Power arriv'd, and sat him down / With his great Father" (VII.584-586, 587-588). And in Book V, the Son receives his appointment as head of the angels and "Vice-gerent" (V.609) in silence. But Abdiel, God observes, needs recognition. Divine praise is important to this angel. The Father notes that Abdiel remained resolute because "this was all thy [Abdiel's] care / To stand approv'd in sight of God, though Worlds / Judg'd thee perverse" (VI.35-37). Abdiel differs from the Son in that he requires divine approval for his more challenging acts of obedience. The Son, on the other hand, only wants to know that his actions satisfy his Father's will: "this I my Glory

account, / My exaltation, and my whole delight, / That thou in me well-pleas'd, declar'st thy will / Fulfill'd, which to fulfill is all my bliss" (VI.726-729). The Son thinks of himself primarily as a servant to the divine will. He is always aware that he manifests the divine will in action only through the power his Father invests in him. Kelley observes that "Christ, like all of Creation, derives his power to act from God. His awareness of this fact is reflected in his selfless obedience" (89). Even after driving the enemies of heaven into hell, the Son does not perceive himself as being the autonomous agent of that action, or as possessing any independent power. Before departing to drive Satan and his band out of heaven, the Son acknowledges God as the source of all his power, indicating that he does not retain any power as his own. The Son understands himself to be the agency of his Father's will. On receiving the command to descend to Earth and judge Man, the Son assures the Almighty that "thine is to decree, / Mine both in Heav'n and Earth to do thy will" (X.68-69). And, on another occasion, the Son describes himself to the Father as "[the] Image of thee in all things" (VI.736). The angelic choir shares the Son's understanding of his relationship with God, and hails him as "of all Creation first, / Begotten Son, Divine Similitude, / In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud / Made visible, th'Almighty Father shines" (III.383-386). This idea is affirmed by the narrator: "all his Father in him [the Son] shone" (VII.196). Given these aspects of his self-perception; that he serves the divine will, and that the power he wields is derived from God, there is no reason, in the Son's mind, for him to expect individual appraisal for the acts he performs. He regards himself as no more than a vessel conveying the divine will.

Self-gratification and personal glory are desires foreign to the Son's motives. Rather, he freely acts in accordance to God's will, to increase the glory of God, because he loves God. As he creates the Earth, the Son's identity is obscured, emphasising that he is God's agent, acting on God's behalf and performing his will.[6] The Son deflects any potential glory for his deeds away from himself and back to the Almighty because he knows that although he participates in such great events as Creation, the routing of the rebel Angels, and the creation of Man, he does so as God's external might. When instructing the Son to create the Earth and Man, God addresses him as "my Word, begotten Son", and says "by thee / This I perform, speak thou, and be it done" (VII.163, 163-164). The Son does not derive any personal satisfaction from these achievements because he does not perceive himself as wielding any power in his own right, but more correctly, he sees himself as an instrument through which his Father operates. MacCallum notes that, before departing to convey the divine will, the Son receives power from the Father (84). Furthermore, the Son is continually acknowledging God as the source of his power: "all Regal Power / Giv'n me" (V.739-740).[7] His victory over Satan and his hordes is contingent upon him being "[a]rm'd with thy [God's] might" (VI.737). For the Son, creating the Earth and Man is no different from any other assignment, as at every moment he chooses to be the agency of his Father's will. Through his

[6] Paul Reifelhoess explores the idea that the pronouns referring to the Father and the Son are deliberately confused, to illustrate that the Son is the physical manifestation of his Father's will.

[7] Other examples of this: "Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume" (VI.730); "[I] shall soon, / Arm'd with thy might, rid Heav'n of these rebell'd" (VI.736-737); "[Angels] stand only and behold / God's indignation on these Godless pour'd / By mee" (VI.810-812).

own self-perception, the Son appreciates that his power is only viable if used to advance God's purpose. Consequently, he attributes to his Father any glory resulting from these feats. The Son does not exult on learning of God's intentions for him to conclude the War in Heaven. His demeanour remains modest and dutiful. He responds to this news by acknowledging God as the Maker, emphasising God's infinite superiority over himself and Creation: " 'O Father, O Supreme of heav'nly Thrones, / First, Highest, Holiest, Best" (VI.723-724). Evidently the Son does not regard himself as any greater or any more equal with God than he did prior to this appointment. The Son observes that he and God are similarly employed, each seeking to glorify the other; he through his obedience to God, and God by providing opportunities for him to serve the divine will. But the apparent symmetry of this relationship does not make the Son his Father's equal. The Son's only ambition is that God be content with his obedience, and any other goals stem from this. The symmetry of the relationship derives from the Son complying with the divine will to a higher degree than any other creature, and thus meriting greater opportunities to serve. The Son, both as God's image, the "*imago dei*", and as his "external efficiency" (Kelley, 85),[8] manifests the intentions of his Father as they become known to him. The Father and the Son are united in advancing the divine purpose, namely to maintain order in Creation. The relationship the Son has with God is based on his awareness that God, as Creator, deserves obedience. In the Son, this awareness is unobscured by any inappropriate rivalling priorities.

[8] Musacchio (13), Kelley (85).

The Son anticipates that the rebellious angels will understand his position as the right hand of God more clearly when they see him wielding his Father's divine power: "all Regal Power / Giv'n me to quell their pride" (V.739-740). He qualifies his predicted victory over the treacherous angels, noting that he will be "Arm'd with thy might" (VI.737). The Son knows that it is God's will that Man shall find mercy because this has already been disclosed in God's earlier speeches: "Man falls deceived / By the other first: man therefore shall find grace, / The other none: in Mercy and Justice both, / Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel, / But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine" (III. 130-134). As the Son hears his Father make this statement, he radiates the divine grace his Father has described: "in him all his Father shone / Substantially express'd, and in his face / Divine compassion visibly appear'd, / Love without end, and without measure Grace" (III. 139-142). Being the physical manifestation of his Father's divine intentions, the Son not only shares his Father's will for mercy to Man, he embodies the grace his Father outlines. The Son's appreciation of God as the source of his being is so great that God's will for action becomes his own.

The Son's self-understanding is exceptionally accurate. He owes to God his existence and his power to act, and recognises that obeying God makes him happy. His greater love for God, angels and Man is born of a greater understanding of himself and his place in Creation. This knowledge influences the way that the Son thinks about himself to the extent that he has no needs or desires except to

perform the divine will. The Son does not seek praise for carrying out his Father's will, and does not respond to the angels' celebrations because he does not perceive himself as an independent agent; the Son acts for the Father, using the Father's power, lent to him for that purpose. The Son ascribes to God all glory arising from these tasks. His only satisfaction is the knowledge that he has accomplished his Father's will. The Son's devotion to his Father's cause is so complete that he is the embodiment of his Father's will; he is God's image, the visible manifestation of the divine will. They share a common purpose: maintaining order in Creation. The Son surpasses the basic requirements for continuing his relationship with the Father: he does what is not required of him, because he holds nothing of himself in reserve from this relationship. His self-awareness progresses and develops as he meets new challenges. Although the Son values his relationship with God as his top priority, he is confronted with difficult situations that challenge this priority, such as God's request for a volunteer to die for Man. Unperturbed by either the prospect of absence from his Father, or of nonexistence, the Son volunteers. The Son's understanding of himself as an instrument of God's will motivates him to act in accordance with that will as soon as he is made aware of it. God gives the Son additional duties and power because the Son is so willing to receive them. Because he has made the Father's concerns for Creation his own, the Son has limited omniscience; he perceives the potential consequences of a situation, and acts to influence the outcome in accordance with the divine purpose. Indeed, the Son serves as a model of obedience for the angels and Man, showing that higher obedience, arising from accurate self-knowledge, is accessible to all creatures. The

Son demonstrates that a creature's happiness depends on maintaining a proper relationship with God.

Chapter Two: Satan

Satan rejects the Son's relationship with God as a model for his own behaviour. In contrast to the Son, Satan wilfully deceives himself about the source and limits of his power to act, his place in Creation, and his relationship to God. Satan maintains a type of self-imposed ignorance about his position in the universe, incorrectly believing that he can rival God, and that his freedom to resist God is absolute. Distorting his self-knowledge to accommodate his will, Satan initially ignores, then renounces, and eventually forgets his angelic self-knowledge. Satan's self-perception and his grasp of his situation deteriorate at a similar rate, so that he becomes increasingly alienated from the consequences of his actions. Refusing to accept that his goals cannot be realised, because he would rival an omnipotent being, Satan either denies responsibility for his failures, or else re-interprets them as successful. Satan loses internal consistency because his opposition to God becomes his only cause for action, and his only constant principle. Satan turns away from his reason by refusing to acknowledge God as his Maker.

Satan's desire to control the wills of other creatures is fundamental to his understanding of himself. When his bid for power in heaven fails, Satan settles on hell as rival empire to heaven, and evil as an alternative value to obedience to God. The motions of degradation made by the rebel angels and the superficial trappings of power mark Satan's rule as oppressive; he derives power from his followers by abusing their faith in him. Satan projects for his followers the illusion that he is a powerful rival warlord, and they respond to this false persona in the belief that it is

authentic. Ironically, domination is the reason Satan gives for rejecting the rule of the divine figurehead, and he stubbornly chooses to continue following his own perverse will, even though this makes him unhappy, because he thinks that obedience to God limits his freedom. Evidently, Satan does not understand power as functioning in any other way because he cannot conceive of any motives for action other than his own. He comprehends all forms of power and authority in terms of domination. For him, repentance means absolute submission. Satan's inaccurate understanding of repentance as submission confirms that he will never again fit into heavenly society.

On regaining consciousness after his fall from heaven, Satan silently assesses his situation, taking in both his new locality and his recent disunion from God. Both cause him sorrow:

> he views
> The dismal Situation waste and wild,
> A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
> As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
> No light, but rather darkness visible
> Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
> .....
> As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
> As from the Centre thrice to th'utmost Pole (I.59-64, 73-74).

Marshall Grossman says that, in this passage, the reader is invited to conceive of Satan's situation as Satan does himself: "the reader sees through Satan's eyes... an external world that mirrors in physical terms Satan's internal distress" (29). Satan has alienated himself from his Maker, and is now located in despair, realised as a dark "Pit" (I.91). And yet, when Satan addresses his companion, he describes their revolt in heroic terms, and insists that it has a future. He tries to make their present

situation appear less dismal. Although he talks about their separation from God and their dismal surroundings, Satan denies that their recent annihilation is absolute. Rather, Satan qualifies the extent of their defeat, and declares that he is resolved to continue their rebellion. Recalling contrived memories of the War in Heaven, Satan describes how he and his rebels threatened God's power, and "In dubious Battle... / ... shook his throne" (I.104-105). Furthermore, in recounting his own version of prior events, Satan makes a series of false statements that are denied by the narrator, whose account of these same events occurs immediately before that of Satan. While Satan describes the assault he led on heaven as both courageous and viable (I.97-105), the narrator says that it was inspired by pride (I.36-37). Satan claims that this assault forced God to defensive action (I.103-105, 113-114), but the narrator calls it a "vain attempt" (I.44). And finally, Satan maintains that their subsequent defeat is not definitive (I.118-122), but the narrator says otherwise: "Him the Almighty Power / Hurl'd headlong flaming from th'Ethereal Sky / With hideous ruin and combustion down / To bottomless perdition" (I.44-47). Satan declares that he and his followers have been defeated in battle only, and that his will and courage remain steadfast:

> What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else not to be overcome? (I.105-109).

But again, these claims are contradicted by the narrator, who tells the reader that although Satan "Vaunt[s] aloud" (I.126), he is actually "rackt with deep despair" (I.126). Through his false statements, Satan implies that his cause was just. He

refers to his cause as "the Glorious Enterprise" (I.89), and justifies his treachery with claims that he was moved to action by a "sense of injur'd merit" (I.98), and his followers, by a fear of oppression. But feeling oneself "impair'd" (V.665) is not a heroic cause for action, and the narrator indicates that Satan has little regard for his companions beyond their usefulness in helping him to achieve his ambition for power: "[Satan] with all his Host / Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid [he] aspir[es] / To set himself in Glory above his Peers" (I.37-39). In the narrator's account, there is no reference to Satan being concerned for the condition of his followers. The narrator has already contradicted Satan's version on almost every point. Evidently, Satan's report is not accurate, but then, he does not intend it to be. This speech is a public speech in which Satan denies reality for the sake of preserving his projected persona, which is based primarily on his state of opposition to God. However, Satan's self-understanding deteriorates because he commits himself to this version of reality as he utters it.

Satan's deceptions operate on two levels. The first is a deliberate dissimulation, aimed at his audience, in this case, Beëlzebub, whom Satan favours over the other fallen angels. Deceptions of this type occur in almost every encounter Satan has with other characters. But he is less conscious of the second level of deception, being himself the object of that dissimulation. Satan must wilfully ignore aspects of his understanding so that he may pursue his desire. In both instances, he employs deceit as a means to his ambition for power.

The first object of Satan's intentional deception is Beëlzebub. After their fall Satan again lies to him, misrepresenting their recent defeat in heaven by falsifying facts and the consequences. Satan is intimate with Beëlzebub, conspiring

with him and not with any of the other fallen angels: "Thou to me thy thoughts / Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart; / Both waking we were one" (V.676-678). And Satan singles Beëlzebub out as special when he addresses him as "Companion dear" (V.673). Nevertheless, Beëlzebub remains one of his followers. This means that if Satan is to retain leadership over Beëlzebub and the other rebels and continue the revolt, he cannot admit their defeat, and so must maintain the fiction that the attack he led on heaven was not only viable and honourable, but also threatening. For these reasons, when speaking to Beëlzebub, Satan describes the War in Heaven as follows:

> Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
> That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
> His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
> In dubious Battle on the Plains of Heaven,
> And shook his throne (I.101-105).

Satan makes their attempt on heaven appear not only noble, but also critical. Satan implies, through an effectively phrased rhetorical question, that God's vastly superior power was concealed from them: "so much the stronger prov'd / He with his Thunder: and till then who knew / The force of those dire Arms?" (I.92-94). And later, when addressing his troops, Satan maintains, first, that God deliberately concealed the extent of his power from the angels (I.637-641), and second, that this concealment invited their challenge (I.642). But Beëlzebub was involved in the assault on heaven too, and having shared in their annihilation, initially responds cautiously to Satan's plan to continue opposing God, focusing the greater part of his first speech on their defeat and on their loss of heaven (I.128-155). Rejecting Satan's version of the war, he says, "Too well I see and rue the dire event, / That

with sad overthrow and foul defeat / Hath lost us Heav'n" (I.134-136). Satan's inaccurate account of their recent history is, in part, an act of persuasion intended to move Beëlzebub from despair to a resolution to continue the revolt. Satan provides Beëlzebub with a new set of terms for describing the war, and in doing so, he also gives Beëlzebub a new way of viewing the war, and himself. Eventually, Beëlzebub not only accepts Satan's false account, he sustains it. In his second speech to Satan, Beëlzebub employs terms similar to those introduced by Satan, and so continues the fiction of "the Glorious Enterprise" (I.89). In tones reverberant of his leader, Beëlzebub claims that only an omnipotent power could have beaten such a force as theirs (I.272-273). Altering his perception of their situation to distance himself from his despair, Beëlzebub helps Satan motivate and manipulate the rest of the infernal host (II.310-416). Implicit in the pair's manipulation is an invitation to the other fallen angels to join them in a mutual self-deception.

The second object of Satan's dissimulation is Satan. In attempting to persuade Beëlzebub that their situation is not one of absolute defeat, Satan is himself deceived. He would have no reason to cling to his fictional account of the heavenly war were he not planning to continue his opposition to God. This self-deception is the necessary basis for Satan's conduct throughout the poem. It is apparent that Satan originally knew better than to behave as he does, because angelic knowledge is explained to Adam as "intuitive" (V.488-489). Before their revolt, Satan and his cohorts were not less informed about their relationships with God or damnation than the loyal angels. From the moment of consciousness, the angels always understand all things that their species is capable of comprehending.

If anything, Satan and his rebels experience more than the obedient angels because, as an immediate consequence of their revolt, these traitors suffer pain, fear, and doubt: "till that hour / Not liable to fear or flight or pain" (VI.396-397). Because of their intuitive understanding, Satan and his legions, at the moment that they decide to break union with the Father, must wilfully ignore the fact that they each owe their existence to him. Eternal damnation was ordained as the punishment for angelic disobedience in the hearing of all; it is a state of mind, arising from the infernal host's unmoving opposition to God. It is Satan's continued opposition to God that makes him unhappy, and his insistent inappropriate ambitions that make that unhappiness unending.[1] From the moment Satan and his followers regain consciousness in hell, they reject the idea of repentance. Satan states that "Peace is despair'd", and he justifies this claim by demanding "For who can think Submission?" (I.660, 661). And Satan's assertions are echoed by Beëlzebub, who rejects repentance on the grounds that the only peace they, the "enslav'd", will now receive is "custody severe, / And stripes, and arbitrary punishment / Inflicted" (II.333-335). Satan refuses to consider repentance because it would require him to

[1]On this subject, Aquinas quotes Damascene: " (*De Fid. Orth. ii*), *death is to men, what the fall is to the angels*". Aquinas continues: "To find the cause, then, of this obstinacy, it must be borne in mind that the appetitive power is in all things proportioned to the apprehensive, whereby it is moved, as the movable by its mover.... Now the angel's apprehension differs from man's in this respect, that the angel by his intellect apprehends immovably... whereas man by his reason apprehends movably, passing from one consideration to another; and having the way open by which he may proceed to either of two opposites. Consequently man's will adheres to a thing movably, and with the power of forsaking it and of clinging to the opposite; whereas the angel's will adheres fixedly and immovably. Therefore, if his will be considered before its adhesion, it can freely adhere either to this or to its opposite (namely, in such things as he does not will naturally); but after he has once adhered, he clings immovably.... God's mercy delivers from sin those who repent.... The devil's first sin still remains in him according to desire; although not as to his believing that he can obtain what he desired" (1a. Q. 64, Art. 2, 322).

surrender his authority to another. Submission is the closest Satan can get, conceptually, to the idea of repentance, and this he rejects due to pride. Satan's damnation is a state of mind; his eternal damnation is dependent upon this continued desire to rival God. Although Satan recognises a correlation between him choosing his will over the divine will and his present unhappiness, he fails to realise that his situation is inescapable because he continues to follow his own will. He says:

> curs'd be thou; since against his thy will
> Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
> Me miserable! Which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell (IV.71-75).

This recalls hell as described by Marlowe's Mephastophilis:

> Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.
> Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
> And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
> In being deprived of everlasting bliss! (I.iii.77-81).[2]

Hell is inescapable because it is an imprisonment of the will, not the body. It is not only, as Satan believes, a geographic location, but also, hell is a state of alienation from God; it is woe and despair: "for within him Hell / He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell / One step no more than from himself can fly / By change of place" (IV.20-23). Nevertheless, he insists that his situation is not irreversible. Satan cannot acknowledge the extent of his defeat because to do so would require

[2] Also see Lewis (99-100).

him to also concede that, given his intuitive knowledge, his opposition to God's omnipotence is ridiculous and his desire for power is both unreasonable and futile.

As has been demonstrated, the inaccuracies in Satan's self-perception are manifested at varying levels of consciousness. At first, Satan comprehends God's omnipotence as well as his peers, but in deciding to revolt, he first ignores God's omnipotence, and eventually articulates a public denial of it. In articulating this denial of God's omnipotence publicly, Satan prevents himself from retracting it. Although Satan works hard to become the persona he projects to his troops, his self-knowledge wavers between lucidity and the fictional self he constructs. Inaccuracies in his self-perception affect Satan sub-consciously, making him an illogical reasoner. Even when he speaks with sincerity, Satan cannot be accurate because he wilfully denies the divinity of the Father and the Son and refuses to repent of his rebellion. In this monotheistic universe, it is crucial to a creature's self-perception that he recognises that he owes his existence to God. But when Abdiel challenges Satan's accusations that God's absolute rule of heaven is unjust he presents Satan with this truth: "shalt thou dispute / With him the points of liberty, who made / Thee what thou art, and form'd the Pow'rs of Heav'n / Such as he pleas'd, and circumscrib'd their being?" (V.822-825).[3] Satan counters this, at

[3] Here, Satan accuses the divine figurehead of tyranny, but the reader is left in no doubt as to who is the real tyrant. It is Satan, not God, who cites "necessity, / The Tyrant's plea" (IV.393-394). In Book III God rejects "necessity" (III.110), explaining that obedience from Man and the angels only has value if it is given freely (III.103-111). As Abdiel is quick to note, the absolute rule of the divine figurehead is just because the universe is hierarchical and the Father created the universe through the Son. Lewis describes the system of order in *Paradise Lost* as based on the hierarchy in Creation. He says that:"Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of this twofold task we have disease or

first with surprise, saying that the Son's role as instrument through which God created everything else is "[a] strange point and new!" (V.855). But then he extends his denial to God also, claiming that he and his followers are not creatures, made by God, but "self-begot, self-rais'd / By our own quick'ning power" (V.860-861). He supports this blasphemy with outrageous argument, reasoning that because none of the angels saw the event Abdiel has described and none of them remembers a time before they were created, Abdiel's claim must therefore be false, and his own correct. Having denied that God is the source of himself and his legions, Satan asserts that they are independent beings, existing of their own wills. But Satan's reasoning is not sound: no creature can witness his own creation or a time prior to his existence. Limited retrospect indicates that a being has been created in time, rather than existing beyond it, like God, who is eternal.

To deny that God is the Creator, as Satan does, is not a rejection of one truth, it is a rejection of all truth. Satan's denial that he is one of God's creatures, first manifested through his challenging God's authority, is initially wilful, because his angelic understanding is intuitive, but as he perseveres in his enmity to God, Satan becomes increasingly deluded. Satan gradually loses sight of truth and believes his own deceits. John Carey accounts for the inconsistencies in Satan's logic by describing him as "apprehending reality through mists of self-deception and forgetfulness" (137). Lewis is even more harsh, stating that "earl[y] in his career he has become more a Lie than a Liar, a personified self-contradiction" (95).

---

monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected. One or the other it will certainly be; for by stepping out of its place in the system... it has made the very nature of things its enemy. It cannot succeed" (72). Satan also says that the angels do not need laws because they do not break them. But in revolting, Satan is in breach of heaven's hierarchy.

Satan thinks that he can control his own circumstances: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (I.254-255). Although this claim seems to be compatible with the image Satan presents of himself in his first speech, it is only half-true. While Satan can make a hell of heaven, he cannot make his hell into heaven. The narrator describes Satan as being "racked with deep despair" (I.126). Contrary to his claims that "The mind is its own place", Satan does not manage to make a heaven of his hell after all. By creating his own account of his situation, Satan deludes himself in an attempt to make his conduct seem viable, and to distance himself from his despair. In opposing an omnipotent being, Satan is engaged in a hopeless predicament. Grossman observes that Satan can never achieve anything because his goals are contradictory: "His mission to escape hell is also a mission to extend it and is thus ineffective precisely to the degree of his success" (71). In spite of his every effort, Satan's hell is a state of stagnation, both of thought and action. His intentions will not be realised, and he cannot extend his thoughts to new ideas. His understanding is as perverted as his will, because his understanding is also set in firm opposition to the divine. The perversion of Satan's understanding increases as time progresses and his conduct requires greater mental determination due to intrusions of truth, realised as the steady thwarting of his intention. Through the duration of the poem, Satan makes a series of statements, always in opposition to some recent manifestation of divine truth. But these various assertions do not reveal any development in Satan's reason beyond his continued enmity to the Father and the Son.

Satan's implacable will compromises his understanding, and prevents him from comprehending his situation realistically. In Book I, he concludes his propagandist dialogue with Beëlzebub on a positive note, resolutely claiming that their recent defeat has given the rebel angels valuable information about their foe that will aid them in later engagements. While Beëlzebub says that he is now forced to believe that God is almighty (I.143-145), neither he nor Satan demonstrates in conversation any understanding of God's omnipotence. Beëlzebub mentions God's omnipotence in a later speech (I.273), but again, neither he nor Satan shows any understanding of it. Beëlzebub concludes that God must be almighty because he beat their powerful amalgamation, although his use of the term "Almighty" (I.144) indicates that he comprehends God's power as a superior force, and not as the original source of all power, "[the] one Almighty... from whom / All things proceed" (V.469-470). And Satan not only presumes to continue their action against a being which his companion declares to be "Almighty", he claims that their recent defeat will ensure future encounters against "[their] grand Foe" (I.122) will be more successful:

> Since through experience of this great event
> In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
> We may with more successful hope resolve
> To wage by force or guile eternal War
> Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe (I.118-122).

Evidently, Satan's awareness of God's omnipotence is no better than Beëlzebub's. Satan concedes that God's power is a greater power than his own, and still supposes that he can dispute this power through guile. He talks about God's power as a limited external attribute, and seems to believe that it is only due to this

additional might that God exerts authority over his peers: "hee / Who now is Sovran... / ... / Whom... force hath made supreme / Above his equals" (I.245-246, 248-249). Indeed, concluding his soliloquy on Niphates, a moment of apparent lucidity, Satan claims he will establish an alternative rule, in rivalry to the Almighty: "Evil be thou my Good; by thee at least / Divided Empire with Heav'n's King I hold / By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign" (IV.110-112). Satan fails to grasp that, as a creature, he cannot choose to be independent of God, and that his proposed evil empire is illusory. Satan's will to oppose God impedes him from acknowledging his relationship to God and from appreciating God as divine nature.

So the cost of Satan's constant denials of reality is irrationality. He entertains an irrational belief that his freedom to resist God is absolute. His stubborn resolution to continue active opposition to God leads Satan to make unrealistic statements, such as his declaration to Beëlzebub that they should remain resolute in their commitment to evil, in spite of possible divine intervention:

> to be weak is miserable
> Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,
> To do aught good never will be our task,
> But ever to do ill our sole delight,
> As being the contrary to his high will
> Whom we resist. If then his Providence
> Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
> Our labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil (I.157-165).

And, while this statement seems to be logical, this is only so if opposition to the divine will is viable, or the speaker believes it to be possible. There appears to be sense in this statement, but it is dependent upon Satan denying God's

omnipotence, a fact that he later concedes is true. He remembers "boasting I could subdue / Th'Omnipotent" (IV.85-86). Satan claims that he and his followers are free to oppose the divine will, but the narrator indicates otherwise, saying that Satan is only free to act because the Father allows him to, and that this freedom is marginal, because Satan's malice will not come to fruition (I.210-220).[4] Furthermore, Satan's statement of stubborn resistance exposes other limits to his freedom. His choices are constrained by the divine actions he has said he will oppose. Grossman observes that, given these circumstances, Satan is not entirely free because "[his] range of action is limited to attempts to negate divine initiatives.... Satan can no more be free of God than a reverse image in a mirror can be free of the object that it reflects" (35).[5] And, given that his actions are always in response to another, namely God, then there cannot be any independent coherence in Satan's behaviour. The author of *The Christian Doctrine* refutes Satan's belief that he is free. Of the fallen angels, he says,

> The evil angels are reserved for punishment. They are sometimes, however, permitted to wander throughout the whole earth, the air, and heaven itself, to execute the judgements of God.... Their proper place, however, is the bottomless pit, from which they cannot escape without

[4] See below (54-57, 61-62).

[5] Fish makes a similar claim, arguing that disobedience results in the dissolution of "selfhood". He says that "Even Satan's poses are not his own initative, but are involuntary responses to external stimuli... he does not adapt himself (the pronoun is meaningless) to situations; situations appropriate him, or, to be more accurate, create the 'him' of the moment" (337-338).

permission. Nor can they do anything without the command of God (985).[6]

God allows Satan to continue in his belief that he is free so that Satan may eventually learn to appreciate divine power through the greater damnation he will bring upon himself:

> the will
> And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
> Left him at large to his own dark designs,
> That with reiterated crimes he might
> Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
> Evil to others, and enrag'd might see
> How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
> Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
> On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
> Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd (I.211-220).

God does not prevent Satan's attack on Man because he also made Man free, and refuses to limit this freedom by controlling Man's selection of experience: "no Decree of mine / Concurring to necessitate his Fall / Or touch with lightest moment of impulse / His free Will" (X.43-46). To these ends, God provides indicators for appropriate behaviour (the locked gates of hell; angelic guards around Eden; Raphael's didactic conversation with Adam; and Man's prohibition) but allows Adam and Eve free will so that their compliance is voluntary. Clearly, Satan's belief that his actions are entirely free is not correct. Satan believes he is free to do as he likes, but is unaware that he can only do so because God allows him to, and

[6] Passages in *Paradise Lost* that correspond with this statement: I.209-220; II.1024-1027; III.682-685; IV.1006-1009; VII.613-616; X.43-47.

that he will always be accountable for his actions. This delusion is symptomatic of his denial that he is God's creature.

Ultimately, Satan reveals himself to be an aggregation of inconsistencies. In his assault on God, Satan not only asserts himself as a being independent of his source; he places himself in direct rivalry to that source. But Satan is not independent of the Father because, as Grossman illustrates, Satan's decision to act still originates with the Almighty (35). Concluding that the absurd nature of Satan's conduct is due to his wilful alienation from God, Lewis says that

> Throughout the poem he is engaged in sawing off the branch he is sitting on... since a creature revolting against the creator is revolting against the source of his own powers – including even his power to revolt.... As a consequence the same rebellion which means misery for the feelings and corruption for the will, means Nonsense for the intellect (94).

Satan's understanding of himself is not consistent because it is subject to the fictions he projects in response to intrusions of reality. Announcing hell as their new habitat, he boasts that "Here at least / We shall be free" (I.258-259). This statement ignores the process of their arrival into hell, which was compelled, and the fact that Satan's freedom is limited. Satan places his reasoning powers in the service of his perverted will as Raphael warns Adam not to (VIII.561-566). Satan denies sound truths like God's omnipotence so that he can pursue his desire for power. He assures his troops that "Here may we reign secure, and in my choice / To reign is worth ambition though in Hell: / Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (I.261-263). Geographically, hell is the space most removed from God (I.73), and as such, it is the lowest point in the divine order, being lower even than creatures without consciousness or freedom, and inanimate objects. In spite of his

"unconquerable Will" (I.106), Satan cannot make hell into anything other than what it is.

In accepting leadership in hell over a place in heaven, Satan also betrays a basic misunderstanding of power. He conceives of power as being derived from the oppression and humiliation of others. Satan does not see beyond the external trappings of power. This is evident in the nature of his rule in hell, which is a deliberate imitation of what he believes he has observed in heaven:

> High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Show'rs on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,
> Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
> To that bad eminence; and from despair
> Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
> Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
> Vain War with Heav'n, and by success untaught
> His proud imaginations thus display'd (II.1-10).

The glory of Satan's rule is superficial, existing in display only. Satan's show of power is received accordingly, his followers making gestures that signal their degradation: "Towards him they bend / With awful reverence prone; and as a God / Extol him equal to the highest in Heav'n" (II.477-479). Ironically, this spectacle of humiliation recalls the type of submission Satan falsely accuses the Son of expecting from the angels in Book V: "Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend / The supple knee?" (V.787-788). He claims that God already reigns in this fashion: "Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile, / Too much to one" (V.782-783). In fact, of all the characters possessing power in *Paradise Lost*, only Satan wants this form of control. From the beginning, his leadership of the fallen angels

has been merely an imitation of how he conceives of heavenly authority: "[Satan] Affecting all equality with God, / In imitation of that Mount whereon / Messiah was declar'd in sight of Heav'n, / The Mountain of the Congregation call'd" (V.763-637). Evidently, Satan does not comprehend the nature of the reign of the divine figurehead because his imitation of heavenly rule is superficial. He shows no understanding of the Son meriting his Father's divine power specifically because the Son does not want authority; he wants to serve his Father. To the Son, divine power is just a medium through which he can convey his Father's will. Satan is obsessed with his own ambitions, to the extent that he cannot imagine goals or conceive of motives for action, other than his own. For Satan, power is a selfish thing, achieved by absorbing the freedom of others. Satan's rule in hell compromises the freedom of his followers. And as long as Satan chooses to follow his own perverse will rather than the divine will - and this he resolves to do forever (IV.108-112) - he will always think of power in terms of domination over others.

Satan's commitment to opposing God requires that he wilfully deny reality. His behaviour is only logical if it is considered within the context of the reality that he allows himself to accept.[7] When considered within the context of the universe of the poem, Satan's opposition to an omnipotent, omniscient, omnific, and originally amiable being is not just foolish, it is implausible. Satan needs to maintain the fiction that his cause is just and credible. Satan is typically unaware of the extent of his own powerlessness, never understanding that his every action

[7]Henry Coleman maintains that, if we allow Satan his delusions, then his ideas are rational: "In relation to his fallen state and his fallen ambition to take power from God, Satan displays in his speech, thought, and action an ability to reason so well that while he may be irrational in relation to unfallen consciousness, he is, in relation to fallen consciousness, highly rational" (65). But to do this, we must ignore the theology of the poem.

must be permitted by the divine will. An example of this occurs in Book II, when Satan journeys through Chaos. The gates of hell swing open, and Satan pauses at the perimeter of Chaos to contemplate this new environment through which he must pass, before spreading his wings and plunging himself into the "wild Abyss" (II.917). When, on his return, Satan recounts this journey through Chaos to his followers he describes a harrowing, but successful crossing of difficult terrain (X.469-480). This speech is politically motivated propaganda. Satan makes deliberate alterations to his story because he wants his audience, the other disobedient angels, to believe that he has acted with courage and heroism, and thus reinforce his position of authority over them. He emphasises the risks of travelling through Chaos, and invents resistance from Night and Chaos. But not all of the inconsistencies in Satan's account are intentional. Satan believes that he navigated his own way through Chaos, supporting himself with his wings. This is only partially true:

> At last his Sail-broad Vans
> He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
> Uplifted spurns the ground, thence many a League
> As in a cloudy Chair ascending rides
> Audacious, but that seat soon failing, meets
> A vast vacuity: all unawares
> Flutt'ring his pennons vain plumb-down he drops
> Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
> Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
> The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud
> Instínct with Fire and Nitre hurried him
> As many miles aloft (II.927-938).

Satan is not aware that his "flutt'ring... pennons" are ineffective, nor aware of the impending disaster from which he is saved. He plummets through nothingness, is buoyed up by gases, or stumbles through semi-solidified matter. Here, Satan is subject to the currents of his environment. Satan's understanding of his situation is compromised by his will. He is not aware of the extent to which he is controlled by the elements, believing instead that he is in control of his movements through Chaos.

Upon landing on Mount Niphates, at the beginning of Book IV, Satan speaks in soliloquy, ostensibly addressing the inanimate sun. This speech is unusual for Satan for a number of reasons. First, he has no audience, and so is not attempting to influence the ideas or actions of another. And second, in this speech, Satan speaks about himself, as honestly as he is able through layers of self-deception and delusion. Without an audience, it is not necessary for Satan to continue his deliberate deceptions, and so he is able to admit the foolhardiness of his situation, and his despair. But even so, Satan's consciousness is so steeped in denial and unrealistic desire that this impedes him from thinking about some things accurately. He shies away from claiming personal responsibility for his actions. Satan cannot claim responsibility for an action and judge the moral wrongness of that action simultaneously. Here, Satan alternates between justifying his actions and judging those actions as if they belonged to another. The impulses are contradictory, like his desire to continue in what he knows to be hopeless, and Satan perseveres in both only by distancing the one from the other. Satan must dissociate himself from his actions before he can assess the moral validity of those deeds. He is divided by rivalling inclinations. John Broadbent says that soliloquy,

as a form of speech, is only available to the disobedient characters of *Paradise Lost*, because it is the articulation of a self divided by contradictory impulses (76-80). Catherine Belsey detects fragmentation in the structure of Satan's speech, which she describes as "a series of conflicting voices" (89). Satan frequently alters his tone, and he moves abruptly from subject to subject. These sudden transitions suggest that Satan's thinking is disordered, preventing him from continuing a single strand of thought. Satan links subjects by relating them to himself, but his narrative perspective is not consistent. He begins this speech in the first person, and then later argues with himself, this new voice being more distanced and critical, and speaking in the second person. Satan has deceived himself to the extent that he can no longer speak honestly about the justness of his actions, and must employ second person narrative if he is to consider his behaviour with any degree of objectivity. The narrator states that Satan's conscience "wakes despair / That slumber'd" (IV.23-24), implying that up until this moment, Satan has been able to ignore the moral values of his actions because he has been alienated from his conscience. But Satan has been so successful that he can no longer assimilate the faculty of moral judgement into his comprehension without evidence of a gap. The voice with which Satan addresses himself as another assumes the role of a conscience and criticises his recent behaviour.[8] Satan debates with himself;[9] using

[8] Lee Jacobus also talks about conscience in relation to self-knowledge in *Paradise Lost*. Jacobus claims that a creature's conscience helps him to observe God's law, and that God's law is ultimately designed to assist Man towards self-knowledge (26-27). This is not the effect Satan's conscience has upon him, but rather it ""wakes despair" (IV.23), and ultimately hardens his resolve to oppose God.

[9] Belsey likens this soliloquy to a dialogue that "invokes a series of conflicting voices within a single speech". The first voice, she identifies as "seek[ing] to evade authority", the second voice "is more lenient", and the third "speaks

a voice that speaks in the first person, he tries to absolve himself of responsibility for his behaviour. He structures his sentences so that he is a passive participant in his own fall: "how glorious once above thy Sphere; / Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down" (IV.39-40). Here, Satan has personified "Pride" and "Ambition", and made them agents acting upon him. Later he says "yet all his [God's] good prov'd ill in me, / And wrought but malice" (IV.48-49). Again, Satan has made himself into the subject of external forces. He is only prepared to claim responsibility for actions with outcomes he can interpret as successful. Satan's understanding of his fall is affected by his fallen consciousness. Filled with despair, Satan views his actions critically. Addressing himself as another, he questions his behaviour and justifications of it, before reprimanding himself:

> O had his powerful Destiny ordain'd
> *Me* some inferior Angel, *I* had stood
> Then happy; no unbounded hope had rais'd
> Ambition....
> .....
> Hadst *thou* the same free Will and Power to stand?
> *Thou* hadst: whom hast *thou* then or what to accuse,
> But Heav'n's free Love dealt equally to all? (IV.58-61, 66-68, emphasis added).

In this second voice Satan curses himself in a tone reverberant of God (III.100-102): "Nay, curs'd be thou; since against his thy will / Chose freely what it now so justly rues" (IV.71-72). This self-damning is succeeded by further despair, and the critical voice is only silent when Satan, panicked by the implications of his self-condemnation, first pities himself, and then ponders escape.

---

from a position of authority". But by identifying three voices, rather than two, Belsey makes "a richly populated kingdom" of Satan's internal debate (89-90).

Although Satan considers repentance, he rejects this idea soon after. But while he considers repenting, Satan reveals a tainted view of both repentance and heavenly power. He approaches the idea of repentance indirectly, as an escape from his present torment: "Me miserable! which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?" (IV.73-74). Satan suggests to himself one possible way that he may "fly / Infinite wrath": "O then at last *relent*: is there no place / Left for Repentance" (IV.79-80, emphasis added). Even now, Satan delays speaking the word "repent", altering it to "relent" at the last moment. The progression of this section of Satan's speech leads the reader to anticipate the word "repent" in line 79, but the idea is deferred until the following line. Satan then rejects this idea, saying that repentance is submission, and is therefore unthinkable (IV.81-82). Satan gives two reasons for rejecting the idea of repentance. The first is pride, Satan's most distinguishing attribute, and the primary motive for his every action since he first breached union with God. Due to his misconceptions about power, Satan thinks that God is a leader like himself, deriving his power through the oppression of others. Such a ruler would impose harsh terms upon a remorseful traitor, requiring the returned individual to surrender his power and will. Satan was not content to witness the elevation of the Son because of his pride, although Abdiel and the rest of the heavenly host rejoiced, and now this same pride prevents his surrender. Satan wants to distinguish himself as an individual, and assert his will over others. Submission is a concept contrary to this desire. And the second reason Satan cites for not repenting is the fear of being shamed in front of his followers.[10] This is pride in another form. Having manipulated his followers into

[10] Adam also explores the idea that an individual derives worth from external appraisal. See below (88-89, 90-91).

doing his will, Satan does not want them to see him belittled or to learn the extent of his deception. Satan wants the fallen angels to believe in the persona he has presented to them. Given these misconceptions of power and repentance, which are reflective of his erroneous self-understanding, there is no longer a place in heaven for Satan. His heavenly name is lost, erased from record (I.361-363, V.658-659). Satan is too wilful to be satisfied with being a member of the heavenly host, and he cannot repent sincerely because he still harbours the inappropriate ambitions that initially inspired him to rebel. Aquinas states that this is one of the reasons for the devil to be damned eternally (1a. Q. 64, Art. 2, 322). Overall, the effect of the second voice on Satan is counter-productive. Satan's critical judgement of himself does not inspire him to repent, but rather, it causes him to reaffirm his hatred of the divine. Having ascertained his position, and the consequences of his stance, Satan resolves to continue his enmity of God and his attack on Man. Satan can foresee only further alienation from God, and worse despair, and so becomes even more committed to opposing the Father.

Satan has given no legitimate reasons for his revolt, nor does he devise any during his soliloquy on Niphates for continuing his resistance, and yet he determines that he will do so anyway. Satan says that he knows his ambition to "subdue / Th'Omnipotent" (IV.85-86) is hopeless, but at the end of this speech, he concludes his soliloquy with a resolution to continue opposing the Father: "farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear, / Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my Good" (IV.108-110). With these words Satan once again alienates himself from truth, and reassumes his mask of self-deceit and his public persona as enemy to God.

Due to his denial of God's power, Satan can no longer appreciate his environment, God's Creation. In his damning state of mind, Satan cannot relate to any of God's works appropriately. On Niphates, Satan expresses hatred for the sun, because its rays remind him of heaven and God. He says:

> to thee I call,
> But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
> O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell (IV.35-39).

The sun is evidence of God's creative power, and so reminds Satan of what he has lost by turning away from God. Whereas, in obedient creatures, Creation inspires joy and celebration, it reminds Satan of his loss, and he responds with despair and anger. This is true of Satan's every encounter with God's works. In the shape of a cormorant, Satan perches on the Tree of Life (IV.194-201), but remains oblivious of the significance of his post. He recognises no contradiction between his purpose, to bring death to Man, and his present perch, the Tree of Life. But by appropriating the Tree of Life as a seat, Satan temporarily makes it into an instrument of his bad intentions. In acting upon his will to oppose God, Satan "perverts best things / To worst abuse, or to their meanest use" (IV.203-204). He perverts the serpent, provoking permanent changes (IX.494-497, 784-785, X.175-181). Although these changes in the serpent are part of the Son's judgement, the serpent is only condemned because Satan uses him as a tool in his deception of Eve. In Book IV Satan surveys Eden, and observes Adam and Eve, but these signs of God's creative power and divine order fill Satan with jealousy and further despair. His response to Eden is both inappropriate and unnatural: "the Fiend / Saw undelighted all delight"

(IV.285-286). He is "undelighted" not because of external stimuli, but because, by wilfully alienating himself from his Maker and his Maker's works, Satan has rejected "delight". Satan takes on the forms of various animals as he draws nearer to his prey, Man. He effects a temporary postlapsarian change upon the behaviours of the animals he inhabits. This effect is not planned, it is subconscious. In particular, Satan alters the behaviour of the lion and the tiger, making them briefly into the predators they will become after the fall. Satan assumes these animal forms because he wants to disguise himself from the angel sentries guarding Eden. But, because Satan does not appreciate the prelapsarian natures of these animals, he causes changes in their behaviour, and thus exposes his presence.

Nor is he fully aware of the extent of the changes his wilful turning from God has wrought upon him. After witnessing the Son's exaltation, Satan develops feelings of pride, envy, anger and despair, and these emotions induce further alterations in his appearance and manner. Uriel sees through Satan's cherub disguise because Satan, believing himself to be alone, and impassioned by his soliloquising, gesticulates without his customary caution: "each passion dimm'd his face / Thrice chang'd with pale, ire, envy and despair, / Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd / Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld " (IV.114-117). In spite of Satan's disguise, Uriel perceives that the distant figure is not one of the heavenly host because Satan's uninhibited behaviour is so different from that of his unfallen counterparts. Satan's features are disfigured by his sinful emotions, but he is unaware of this. Later, Satan is surprised that Ithuriel and Zephon cannot identify him in his true shape, not realising that his outward form is marred, reflecting his inner ugliness. Satan revels in recognition, and is "abasht" (IV.846)

when asked "Which of those rebel Spirits adjudg'd to Hell / Com'st thou[?]" (IV.823-824). The changes in Satan's appearance signify not the persona he would project, but rather, they convey his true identity as a fallen angel.

In his initial response to Man, whom he approaches with malice preconceived, Satan betrays serious failures in his fallen comprehension. Adam and Eve are happy in Eden; they are in union with their Maker; they are content in their respective positions in Creation; and they find increased happiness in one another. At first, Satan is in awe of the human pair, for they have been made in God's image (IV.288-294), but with his speech, he also recovers his purpose, and a renewed awareness of his own sense of loss: "O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold" (IV.358). Satan listens to their conversation, and observes an intimate interaction between the pair, appropriate to their positions in God's order and their relationship to one another:

> [Eve] with eyes
> Of conjugal attraction unreprov'd,
> And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
> On our first Father...
> .....
> ...he in delight
> Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
> Smil'd with superior Love (IV.492-495, 497-499).

Satan declares that he finds this scene to be a "[s]ight hateful" (IV.505), and so he should, because Adam and Eve exhibit mutual love, divine obedience, and contentment. But Satan consciously registers only the sexual aspects of the scene, and his own, unfulfilled desire. In focusing on "carnal pleasure" (VIII.593), Satan is guilty of the immoderate brutish lust that Raphael warns Adam against

(VIII.588-594). Witnessing divine obedience in other creatures reinforces Satan's internal hell, causing him to "pin[e] / His loss" (IV.848-849). In the disparity between Adam's and Eve's present happiness and his own despair Satan feels envy, and thus finds the resolve to continue his attempt on Man. With no hope of relief, Satan wants only to destroy the happiness he sees before him. The prospect of ruining such perfection is so terrible that Satan claims reluctance to do so, transferring the responsibility for his intentions to God: "Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge / On you who wrong me not for him who wrong'd" (IV.386-387). Here Satan fabricates an alternative to the truth that is more defensible in his mind.

The motives Satan gives for attacking Man are not heroic; they are both selfish and cowardly. Although Satan says that he knows inflicting his grief on others will not lessen his own misery, this knowledge does not avert him from action: "[his conscience] wakes the bitter memory / Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensure" (IV.24-26). Satan chooses to act against his better knowledge because, in his misery, he cannot endure happiness in others. Raphael warns Adam that Satan is an enemy

> who envies now thy state,
> Who now is plotting how he may seduce
> Thee also from obedience, that with him
> Bereav'd of happiness thou mayst partake
> His punishment, Eternal misery;
> Which would be all his solace and revenge,
> As a despite done against the most High,
> Thee once to gain Companion of his woe (VI.900-907).

Satan's pride dictates that he must get revenge for the defeat he suffered in heaven, and while God, his professed enemy, is inviolable, Man is a vulnerable target. As the action of the poem unfolds, Satan steadily lowers his goals, but he is so lacking in insight that he rejoices as if he had achieved the victory that he originally sought. Initially, in storming heaven, Satan wanted to supplant God, but following his defeat, Satan claims to be pleased with the tactical information derived from the experience. Later, he settles on attacking Man because, as Beëlzebub argues to the hellish council at Satan's prompting (II.378-385), Man is an "easier enterprise" (II.345). Since Man is "favour'd more / Of him who rules above" (II.350-351), his destruction would represent a serious affront to God, and yet, Man is still a suitable victim for Satan because, in spite of his divine esteem, Man is "less / In power and excellence" (II.349-350). But, Satan's conduct towards Man shows a lack of insight. Satan claims that he does not hate Adam and Eve, although he is vicious in his acts against them. Although Satan has decided upon Man as the target of his revenge, he is uncertain of his goal in destroying Man. Beëlzebub predicts the eventual outcome of their proposed attack on Man:

> either with Hell fire
> To waste his whole Creation, or possess
> All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
> The puny inhibitants, or if not drive,
> Seduce them to our Party, that their God
> May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
> Abolish his own works (II.364-370).

Given that Beëlzebub is voicing a plan that was first conceived by Satan, there is no evidence to suggest that his surmising does not likewise originate with Satan. And yet, in Book IV, Satan assumes that the consequence of his attack on Man will

be not Man's annihilation, but his alliance with Satan and his residing in hell (IV.378-385). Here, Satan speaks sincerely, having no audience to deceive. Neither of these two presumptions comes to fruition. In his judgement of Adam and Eve, when God extends mercy and grace to Man, Satan's involvement in the disobedience and his dire expectations are cited as causes for Man's lighter sentence (III.130-132, 156-164). By eavesdropping on Adam and Eve, Satan learns of his own judgement (X.341-344), but he fails to comprehend the implications of his sentence, and so believes his punishment to be inconsequential (X.494-503). Satan celebrates his successful temptation of Eve as if his victory over Man, and thus God, were unconditional: "Him by fraud I have seduc'd / From his Creator" (X.485-486). At this moment, Satan genuinely believes that he has extended his empire:

> [God] thereat
> Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv'n up
> Both his beloved Man and all his World,
> To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,
> Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
> To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
> To rule, as over all he should have rul'd (X.487-493).

Since his soliloquy on Niphates, Satan has reset his sights from usurping God's power to dividing the governable empire and establishing an alternative rule to that of heaven. In his mind, this division still preserves Satan from servitude. But the means to this perceived victory, the temptation of Eve, is cowardly, being saturated with compromise. John Leonard observes that although Satan breaks away from heaven's ranks because he thinks that divine obedience is humiliating, yet in his seduction of Eve Satan fawns on and flatters a lesser creature, while being himself

in the form of an even lesser creature still (104). Satan steadily degrades himself by compromising the ideals that prompted his revolt, and accomplishes less and less. And the narrator makes it clear that Satan's limited success brings about the beginnings of his absolute defeat.

It is only in Book V, early in the chronology of the poem, while witnessing God exalt the Son, that Satan first becomes aware that power exists in heaven, and then, that it is transferable. Satan thinks that power is finite, and that only one being can possess it at a time. Satan "thinks himself impair'd" (V.665) not, as he later claims, because he thinks this is evidence of a dangerous imbalance in the power structure in heaven (V.772-802), but because the recipient of this power is another being, and not Satan himself. Satan envies the Son for what he understands of the Son's power and prestige. He does not understand that God, in elevating the Son, is creating a divine representative who mediates between himself and the angels.[11] In revolting and then claiming leadership in hell, Satan is not trying to establish a political power structure of a different nature to that of heaven, as he understands it; he is only trying to secure a position of power for himself:

> and forth
> In order came the grand infernal Peers,
> Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seem'd
> Alone th'Antagonist of Heav'n, nor less
> Than Hell's dread Emperor with pomp Supreme,

[11] As the Father exalts the Son (V.603-606), he says to the angels: "Under his great Vice-gerent Reign abide / United as one individual Soul / For ever happy" (V.609-611). And during his debate with Satan Abdiel says: "nor by his Reign obscur'd, / But more illustrious made, since he the Head / One of our number thus reduc't becomes, / His Laws our Laws, all honour to him done / Returns our own (V.841-845).

> And God-like imitated State; him round
> A Globe of fiery Seraphim enclos'd
> With bright imblazonry, and horrent Arms (II.506-513).

In Satan's mind, the only difference between God's reign and his own is his relationship to the available power. While Satan rules in hell, in heaven he cannot imagine rising beyond what he calls "service" (IV.45). Even in his soliloquy Satan maintains that obedience to the divine is a surrendering of individual freedom. Satan chooses to continue following his own perverse will, even though this makes him unhappy, because he refuses to limit his freedom by modifying his behaviour and complying with the divine will. He says that he cannot repent because repentance involves submission. Satan's reluctance is based on pride and an unwillingness both to relinquish his power, manifested as the exertion of his own will over others, and to submit to another. That Satan assumes that his followers, whom he regards as his inferiors, would scorn him for repenting further demonstrates Satan's own distorted conception of power. Satan expects others to behave like him, and he does scorn those whom he perceives as less powerful than himself. Stella Purce Revard says that Satan understands obedience to the divine as "the irrational submission of the self" (51). Given that Satan's desire to impose his will over the wills of others is central to his self-perception, obedience to the divine would indeed compromise that self-perception.

In Book V, at the beginning of his revolt, Satan is not honest with either himself or his followers about his motives for rebellion, or what he would achieve by it. Revard states that this is because initially Satan's defiance is directed towards the Son, because Satan objects to the Son's exaltation. She goes on to say that Satan only consciously opposes God when, upon discovering that the pair are

inseparable, he continues his treachery (60, 77-81). But this is not correct. The Son becomes the subject of Satan's envy at the moment he receives divine power and prestige from the Father. Satan's insurrection is motivated by a desire to gain these things for himself, and this is why he "[thinks] himself impair'd" (V.665). Coveting the Son's power is inappropriate because, as Abdiel observes, Satan is a being inferior to the Son, and owes his existence to the Father, through the Son. Before Satan can think that rivalling God is feasible, he must first block aspects of his angelic self-awareness and his understanding of God's divinity, from his mind. From the first instant that Satan chooses to follow his own will rather than the divine will, he uses deceit. Satan's self-deceits mean intentional dissimulation in the public sphere. As Leonard points out, Satan deliberately conceals his dissatisfaction from the rest of heaven by participating in the song and dance celebrating the Son's exaltation (101). Leonard says that Satan does this because he believes that he can act out his maturing desire for heavenly power; for Satan to have a motive like this, he must first deceive himself about the divine figurehead and his own creaturely nature. Even at this early stage in his career, Satan is in the process of inventing his public persona and developing false reasons for rebellion. Moved by ambition, Satan persuades the angels who answer his summons to join him in revolt. But, he does not mention his own desire for power when addressing these angels; instead, he tries to convince these angels that they are unhappy in heaven, and that they will benefit from challenging divine authority. Here, Satan employs deceit to accomplish his goals, simultaneously developing the deceptions he will use over others, and his deception of himself. Although it is not until Abdiel contests his propaganda about power in heaven that Satan specifically

denies God as his Maker, this denial is implicit in his desire to oppose his Maker. During this exchange with Abdiel, Satan methodically rejects every reason Abdiel presents him with for abandoning his insurrection, and in uttering these rebuttals, Satan adopts them as beliefs.

Satan interprets reality to conform to his wilfully inaccurate self-understanding. He is wholly committed to each deception, for its duration. Consequently, Satan deceives not only his companions, but also God's faithful angels, "For neither Man nor Angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone" (III.682-684). Duplicity becomes Satan's main means of inter-action with others. In Book III Satan assumes the form of a cherub (III.634-644), and asks Uriel where he will find Man (III.654-680). For a time, Uriel is beguiled because he does not suspect disparities between appearance and reality. And on the morning of the second day of the War in Heaven, Satan feigns surrender while his allies prepare the canons (VI.558-567). The obedient angels do not suspect Satan's apparent submission, and only discover that he lied when the canons are fired (VI.580-594). In both instances, although Satan temporarily fools the loyal angels with his fraud, he does not compromise their obedience to God. Satan has learnt that he can create disparities between appearance and reality, and he knows that obedient creatures do not doubt appearances; he is able to abuse their faith. Satan's commitment to his cause is disconcerting for obedient angels, particularly because when confronted with the impropriety of his actions, Satan only dissimulates further, to the extent that he will deliberately misinterpret every fact presented to him, rather than concede his own error. This pattern of behaviour is similar to his tendency to blame others for

failure rather than admit he is in error. Having wilfully turned away from his reason, Satan reconstructs his understanding to accommodate his will.

Satan is like the Son in that his conduct manifests his perception of himself. While the Son's dedication to fulfilling the divine will arises from his appreciation that he was created by God and his awareness that God is omnipotent, Satan fervently denies these truths and aspires to have power in his own right. Satan deceives himself about his nature, his place in the divine order, and his relationship to God. Once assumed, these self-deceptions are irreversible. Nothing Satan does can alter his self-knowledge for the better; he creates for himself a hopeless, but self-imposed situation: alienation from his Maker. His awareness of his identity and his perception of his situation can only deteriorate further, without any possibility of rectification. It is evident through Satan's attempts to replicate heavenly power and authority in hell that he does not understand the purpose and function of God or his divine order. Satan's will to pursue revenge against God is self-destructive, spiralling him into increasing self-deception and further alienation from God. Satan's despair correlates with his self-perception. Although we first see Satan deceiving himself about his circumstances to evade despair, it is this that strengthens his resolve to oppose God when he does admit to himself that his actions are futile. After his defeat in heaven, Satan's despair becomes inseparable from his self-knowledge as motivation for action. Chronologically, the last action to have any significant affect on Satan's self-perception is his resolve to destroy Man (IV.358-392). He decides to do this even though he knows that success will not alleviate his unhappiness or improve his situation. Satan's role of enemy to God has become essential to the way he thinks about himself, making him

determined to persist. God allows Satan to act out his malicious intentions and aggravate his present situation, but limits Satan's success: Satan derives his existence from God; although free, Satan cannot act independently of the divine will. Returning to hell, Satan pronounces his encounter with Eve to be a victory over God and Man but his perceived success is undermined and his independence from God is shown to be illusory when he and his followers are transformed into serpents. This transformation imposes a greater restriction on Satan's freedom than ever before, limiting his movements and his ability to communicate, and contradicting his self-perception. Returned to the form he assumed to commit his last offence, Satan and followers become subject to the sentence the Son passed on the Serpent. In spite of his claims otherwise, Satan derives his freedom to act from God, and is always accountable for his actions.

Chapter Three: Adam

Adam's decision to fall is commonly perceived as sudden,[1] and as being prompted by a noble desire to share in his wife Eve's future.[2] Certainly, the newly made Adam recognises that he owes his existence to another; Adam wants to learn the identity of his Creator so that he can demonstrate his appreciation. Initially Adam's understanding that he is a creature is the primary influence for his behaviour. But the idea that he sins suddenly does not account for his every action prior to this choice, actions that demonstrate the gradual development of a rivalling priority. Through his confession to Raphael we see Adam beginning to ascribe his happiness to his relationship with Eve rather than to his relationship with God. In spite of the stern warnings Raphael gives, Adam persists in his immoderate estimation of Eve, and he allows this to influence his reason. Eventually, Adam values his relationship with Eve as of equal importance to his relationship with God.

In Book IV, Adam and Eve make their first entrance into the narrative. Satan, who is seeing Eden and its inhabitants for the first time, espies them:

> Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
> Godlike erect, with native Honour clad
> In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all,
> And worthy seem'd, for in their looks Divine
> The image of their glorious Maker shone,
> Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
> Severe, but in true filial freedom plac't;

[1] Lewis (122), Waldock (30), and Fish (227-228).

[2] Lewis (122), Waldock (45-47).

Whence true authority in men (IV.288-295).

Man stands apart from the beasts because he is "erect", implying both his stature, and his reason, which is "Godlike erect". This distinguishes Man as superior in kind to the animals, "for in [his] looks Divine / The image of their glorious Maker shone". God's image is realised in Man through the austere qualities of "Truth, Wisdom, [and] Sanctitude". Adam and Eve are not at first differentiated; they are initially described as a pair. This emphasises their intimate marital bond, which is based on reason and love.

This first view of Man is primarily focused on their appearance and carriage, but when the pair converse, their inner thoughts prove to be equally austere. In discourse they express thoughts and concerns appropriate to their creaturely existence. In this scene, the couple demonstrate that they conceive of themselves accurately, comprehending both their creaturely natures and their respective positions in Creation. Adam speaks first, in accordance with his hierarchical superiority over Eve, and Eve listens attentively. Adam begins by communicating his appreciation for God, his maker:

needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample World
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite,
That rais'd us from the dust and plac't us here
In all this happiness (IV.412-417).

These lines are significant because they establish Adam's thoughts about God. Adam reasons that God must be "infinitely good" not only because he created Adam and Eve, but also because he "plac't us here / In all this happiness". He observes that God does not himself benefit in creating Man: "[we] who at his hand

/ Have nothing merited, nor can perform / Aught whereof hee hath need" (IV.417-419). God requires in return only that he and Eve pledge their obedience to him by refraining from eating of one tree. Adam thinks that God's prohibition will be easily obeyed, because he and Eve are keen to show gratitude to their Creator, and the prohibition is only a slight limit on their freedom, given the extensive choice of edible fruits in Eden. These thoughts are righteous. Adam values his relationship with God to such an extent that, when Raphael warns him against disobeying God (V.512-518), Adam has difficulty conceiving of a motive for breaking union with this "infinitely good" God. Repeating God's declaration that death will be Man's punishment for breaking his prohibition, Adam surmises that death must be "Some dreadful thing no doubt" (IV.426). Although innocent of death itself, Adam is sufficiently informed, by both God's command and his severe tone, to know that death is something he should act to avoid. Adam decides that, with all the freedom and authority Man has been given, compliance to this one law will not be difficult, nor should they think it so. Adam says that he and Eve should not focus on the severity of this one restriction, but that they should contemplate the gifts their Maker has given them, and the freedom he has granted them. Here, Adam is instructing himself and Eve to recognise their happiness, and to attribute this happiness rightly to God, as the source of their existence, and of their present circumstances. As he later tells Raphael, the prohibition is, to Adam, an opportunity for him to affirm his relationship with his Creator (V.548-553). Adam associates death, as the consequence of transgressing God's command, with that unhappy state, divine disfavour.

Within this speech Adam also demonstrates an appropriate regard for Eve. He addresses her as "'Sole partner and sole part of all these joys, / Dearer thyself than all'" (IV.411-412). Adam's salutation is exact. Eve is his only companion, and the only other to enjoy Eden and dominion over the lesser creatures. That she is dearer to Adam than all of Eden and its inhabitants is appropriate, given their supremacy in Eden. Adam rightly discusses their situation as being the same for both of them; they are both creatures of God, compliance to the prohibition is required from the two of them equally, and they share authority over the animals. Adam finds pleasure in Eve's company, saying that he would enjoy maintaining the garden even if the work were "toilsome" because her presence would make it "sweet" (IV.439). Again, this is as it should be. For, while Adam was made "for God only", Eve was made "for God in him" (IV.299). In his appearance, gestures and speech, Adam exhibits his authority over Eve, an authority that is derived from the divinely ordered hierarchy that places the human pair above the animals. The narrator describes how Adam's "fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd / Absolute rule" (IV.300-301). Adam understands his place in the divine order very well; he governs the animals, his wife Eve, and himself, and he shows proper reverence for beings higher in the divine order than himself. In his first speech, Adam expresses the desire to obey the prohibition of his ultimate superior, God. And Adam demonstrates, in relating to God as a creature, to Eve as a husband, and to Eden as lord, that he comprehends his position in God's universe correctly, and thus that he is developing an accurate self-conception. Adam establishes that he is indeed sufficient to stand.

Later, Adam turns to Eve and observes that it is time for the pair to sleep. He notes that it is God's will that Man's time should be divided between work and sleep in accordance with the already established division between day and night (IV.612-614). Furthermore, Adam states, Man needs more rest than other earthly creatures because his time is spent purposefully: "Man hath his daily work of body or mind / Appointed" (IV.618-619). Unlike the other creatures, Adam and Eve occupy themselves during the daylight hours. The "daily work of body" pertains to the pruning, propping and trimming of Eden's vegetation, and is symbolic of the "daily work of... mind", the moderation and temperance the pair are encouraged to cultivate in their own minds, through conversation and contemplation. Adam demonstrates this type of moderation over thought when he responds to Eve's query regarding the stars and the apparent lack of creatures awake at night to appreciate their light (IV.657-658). Recalling his own conversation with his Maker, Adam informs Eve that the stars "Shine not in vain" (IV.675) because the world is to hold a greater population than just the two of them.[3] But he also says that the light administered by the stars holds off the darkness of unformed matter, that it encourages growth on earth (IV.664-673), and

---

[3] In Book VIII God says to Adam:

> 'Not only these fair bounds, but *all the Earth*
> *To thee and to thy Race I give*; as Lords
> Posses it' " (VIII.338-340, emphasis added).

And a short time later, Adam demonstrates that he has heard and understood this information when he says to God:

> 'Man by number is to manifest
> His single imperfection, and beget
> Like of his like, his Image multipli'd
> In unity defective, which requires
> Collateral love, and dearest amity' (VIII.422-426).

Raphael mentions this divine command in his own account of Creation. He describes God instructing Adam and Eve to "'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth'" (VII.531).

that God and his stars are not appreciated by Man alone, receiving praise from the heavenly beings whose singing he and Eve have heard (IV.675-688). Adam has not been informed of these last three points, he has independently deduced them by applying his reason.

Before finally retiring for the night, Adam and Eve sing a hymn of praise for their Maker. Adam and Eve act simultaneously, moving and singing as one. This spontaneously composed hymn signifies that their praise is divinely inspired, and that they are in harmonious accord with God, with each other, with the rest of Creation, and thus, with themselves. This is supported by the content of the hymn; an "adoration pure" (IV.737) articulating their affirmation of God, each other, and their places in Eden. In an ominous aside, the narrator comments "O yet happiest if ye seek / No happier state, and know to know no more" (IV.774-775). While singing their hymn to God, Adam and Eve are "thrice happy"(VII.631); they are happy, they are aware that they owe this happiness to God, and they understand that the continuation of this happiness depends upon them. They apprehend the debt they owe to God, as their Maker, understand their place in Creation, and at present, they "know to know no more" (IV.775).

By the close of Book IV, it is clear that Adam is sufficient to stand. Adam perceives himself accurately, and states his intention to maintain his relationship with God through continued obedience. Exhibiting an appropriate regard for his Maker, Adam esteems his relationship with God highly, and says that he means to observe God's prohibition. Adam is mindful of his place in Creation, and of the consequent responsibilities. Towards Eve, Adam is respectful, reverent and loving. He tempers his love for Eve with reason, and exerts his

rightful authority over her with reserve. Adam perceives that his daily physical labour, governing the exuberant growth of Edenic vegetation, exemplifies the moderation with which he is to master his own thoughts.[4]

Book V begins with Adam waking up, roused from his sleep by the rising sun, the wind rustling through the trees, and the birds' singing (V.1-8). The sleep from which he wakes has been "airy light" (V.4) because he is in union with God, and thus experiences no tension between his creaturely nature and his will. Adam turns to his still sleeping wife. While Adam observes signs that Eve is in distress, "[her] Tresses discompos'd, and glowing Cheek" (V.10), he responds only to her beauty. Pausing to admire Eve for a short moment before trying to awaken her, Adam fails to recognise that what he looks on are symptoms of discomposure:

> he on his side
> Leaning half-rais'd, with looks of cordial Love
> Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
> Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
> Shot forth peculiar Graces (V.11-15).

Here, Adam is paying too much attention to Eve's "Ornament" (VIII.538). Quite simply, Adam fails to register Eve's agitation because he does not see beyond her physical attributes. He esteems Eve's appearance to a greater degree than this surface warrants, and thus fails to notice her distress. The narrator describes what Adam perceives. Leaning over Eve, Adam sees only her "Beauty", that "[shoots] forth peculiar Graces". At this moment in the poem, Adam's moral position is ambiguous. His appreciation for Eve's appearance is immoderate, overcoming his

[4] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski talks about gardening in Eden as a parallel for the way Adam and Eve are to govern their thoughts.

initial request for a rational companion, but it does not compromise his obedience to God. It is a "sinless error".[5]

When Adam speaks, he addresses Eve with a balance of love, respect and authority, but his words are loaded with as yet sinless ambiguities. Adam says Eve is "[his] fairest, [his] espous'd, [his] latest found, / Heav'n's last best gift, [his] ever-new delight" (V.18-19). And, while these epithets are both correct and in the style previously established in Adam's earlier speeches, they sound ominous when considered alongside Adam's inordinate appreciation of Eve's beauty. Eve's account of her troubling dream disturbs Adam also, although he attempts to reassure her in his response that the dream is a harmless product of her fancy. Preoccupied in his concern for Eve, Adam begins "Best Image of myself and dearer half" (V.95). This phrase creates further ambiguities because it signifies Adam's increasing admiration for Eve. Adam himself is an image of his Maker, and Eve, an image of God in Adam. Adam should honour Eve as an image of God, not as an image of himself. Adam's praise of Eve as an image is dangerous because it implies an inclination towards idolatry, and his revering of her as an image *of himself* is even more so because it is narcissistic. Nor should Eve be Adam's "dearer half". Given his dominion over all earthly things, Adam should not esteem any other creature above himself. Moreover, in valuing Eve as dearer than himself, Adam obscures the true and rightful object of his adoration, namely, God. Here, Adam is in error because his opening address is immoderately reverent towards Eve, but this error is not, in itself, sinful because it has not affected his relationship with God. Even so, it signifies that Adam is appraising his relationship

[5] Musacchio's "sinless error" is explained above (vii, 5n).

with Eve as an increasingly higher priority. Adam is beginning to honour his wife more than is appropriate.

However, this sinless error is not sustained by the content of Adam's speech. Wanting to console Eve, Adam applies his reason to the source of her distress. Adam considers whether the mind of an innocent being can be altered by evil dreams. He reasons that it cannot, on the grounds that Eve was asleep at the time of her dream, so her fancy was not restrained by reason: "Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (V.117-119). Adam deduces that the dream is a disordered compilation of fragments from conversations of the previous day. He concludes his analysis optimistically, saying that, if anything, Eve's dream demonstrates that she will resist the temptation to transgress God's only law: "what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream, / Waking thou never wilt consent to do" (V.120-121). This is not only a fair account of Eve's dream; it is also a subtle transformation of an alarming occurrence into a didactic experience. Adam suggests to Eve a positive way of understanding her dream, and she accepts it.[6] Here, Adam behaves aptly. With these words Adam offers his wife support and encouragement, and does not compromise his relationship with God.

While in conversation with Raphael, Adam demonstrates an enthusiasm to learn, and verifies which aspects of Creation are appropriate for human study. Adam initiates the discussion by asking Raphael about the food consumed by the angels in heaven (V.461-467). He wants to learn about this heavenly creature that dwells in God's presence and is superior to him in nature. As the dialogue

[6] Musacchio approves of Adam's interpretation of Eve's dream (103-109).

develops, Adam learns that, like Man, angels appreciate God's creative power, and that they maintain their relationship with God through continuing obedience to him (V.520-543). At his request, Adam is told of the angels that made war on heaven, the events leading up to their treachery, their defeat and flight from heaven. Adam then asks Raphael to tell him about the creation of heaven, the universe and earth, and more particularly, what inspired God to action: "what cause / Mov'd the Creator in his holy Rest / Through all Eternity" (VII.90-92). Recognising that there must be limits to the information Raphael can give him, Adam accounts for his interest as arising from a desire to appreciate God more fully. Before answering Adam, Raphael instructs him to regulate his desire for knowledge. The angel approves of Adam's curiosity about God's works, but states that some aspects of Creation are beyond Adam's human understanding and that some subjects are not relevant to his development at this time. Although he does not specify the subjects he intends, Raphael deems as suitable subjects for human consideration knowledge that contributes to Adam's recognition of God's divine power. After hearing Raphael's account of Creation, Adam presents Eve's concern regarding the apparent wastefulness of the stars shining at night (VIII.13-38). Adam elaborates on Eve's initial query, and assuming that lighting the earth is the only purpose of the stars, questions the efficiency of placing the stars at such a distance from earth. Again, Raphael praises Adam's reasons for deliberating on the structure of God's universe, but this time he refuses to answer Adam's question because, he says, motives for divine action is information not relevant to human understanding. The angel then outlines for Adam the knowledge that Adam may, with heavenly sanction, pursue: "joy thou / In what he gives to thee, this Paradise / And thy fair

Eve; Heav'n is for thee too high / To know what passes there; be lowly wise: / Think only what concerns thee and thy being" (VIII.170-174). Raphael's advice recalls the narrator's comment that Man will be happiest if he remains content with his situation, and respects the limits of human inquiry, "know[ing] to know no more" (IV.775).

Here, Adam is warned not to desire more information than suits his purpose. Knowledge that promotes an increased understanding of Man's position in God's universe, and thus advances a greater appreciation for God, is good. The advice Raphael now gives to Adam refers back to his earlier instruction, "That thou art happy, owe to God, / That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself, / That is, to thy obedience"(V.520-522). Adam's and Eve's creaturely development and happiness depend upon the pair increasing their understanding. But knowledge that does not correlate directly to either Man's situation in the divine order or his relationship with God is knowledge for its own sake, and therefore is self-effacing. To Raphael has been assigned the task of educating Adam about his present situation, to warn him of the type of danger Satan presents, and to offer Adam some direction for his intellectual explorations:

> what thou canst attain, which best may serve
> To glorify the Maker, and infer
> Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
> Thy hearing, such Commission from above
> I have receiv'd, to answer thy desire
> Of knowledge within bounds (VII.115-120).

Adam eagerly accepts Raphael's guidance, as is evident from his tentative phrasing of the question about the stars. Although aware that not all knowledge is available for human exploration, Adam is unsure of definite limits of divinely approved

human inquiry, and so tries the boundaries. Once he has clarification, Adam states that he is content to respect the limit imposed on valid human knowledge. Adam's expressed contentment is the third component of the concept of threefold happiness.

Expressing a desire to reciprocate, Adam tells his own story to Raphael, beginning with his first moments, and continuing up until the present. In this narration, Adam describes his initial self-conception, which seems sound and receptive to further development. Adam recalls that his first thoughts, upon gaining consciousness, were to discover his origin. Contrary to Satan's reasoning in Book V (V.853-866), the recently made Adam concludes that since he cannot recall the process of his existence, he must have been made by another. Adam's recognition that he is a created being is immediately followed by a desire to know his Creator so that he may acknowledge the dual debt of his existence and his happiness (VIII.273-282). These responses are impeccable. Already, Adam has demonstrated an accurate understanding of his own creaturely nature, and expressed a desire to form a relationship with his Maker. Furthermore, in seeking to "know" and "adore" the being to whom he owes his present happiness, Adam is spontaneously exploring the potential concept of threefold happiness. That happiness in Eden is composed of three elements is a concept that is clearly significant to Man's original perfection. The idea is described by the heavenly choir immediately after Man's creation (VII.625-632), and has recently been mentioned again by Raphael as he explained to Adam that Man's relationship with God must be intentionally maintained (V.520-521).

Adam's responses in his conversation with God through the Son are equally precise. During this conversation, God tests the "sudden apprehension" he has engrafted in Adam (VIII.354), and assesses Adam's capacity to apply this divinely gifted knowledge to his own self-understanding. In three distinct instances, Adam proves that he has a satisfactory awareness of his creaturely nature. The first is when Adam fails to find himself a suitable companion among the animals. Adam has been granted intuitive comprehension of the natures of the animals before him, and he applies this knowledge to conclude that these brutish natures cannot satisfy his non-specific sense of need (VIII.353-354). The second is when Adam identifies this feeling as a longing for a companion, rational like himself, with whom he can share his existence (VIII.363-366, 383-391). Adam explains to God that none of the animals is a suitable companion because animals are not designed to deliberate as he is (VIII.391-396). And the third instance is when Adam reasons that he is unlike God because, whereas God is perfect and complete in himself, Adam needs a mate, for social interaction and procreation (VIII.415-433). Sensing that a companion will be important to his situation in Eden, Adam expresses his concerns to God immediately. And although disagreeing with God's initial decision, Adam remains respectful, beginning his insistence with "'Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power, / My Maker, be propitious while I speak'" (VIII.379-380). Eventually, God affirms Adam's persistent appeal for a creature like himself. Even at this early stage in Adam's development, self-understanding is important, because God reveals that his apparent reluctance has been a test to assess Adam's "knowing... / ... of [him]self" (VIII.438-439).

Adam's persistence, even after God has apparently dismissed his request, is good, because it shows that he perceives what is relevant to his own creaturely happiness.

Satisfied that Adam has a clear understanding of himself, and that his desire for a mate is founded primarily upon a longing for rational companionship, God creates Eve. Adam's reactions to Eve are complex. At Eve's entry into his narrative, a split occurs, dividing the Adam who is remembering this episode from the Adam who is the subject of the narrative. In the act of remembering Eve, Adam reveals inappropriate responses to her.

The newly made Adam is enchanted with Eve's appearance, as indeed he should be, because she is designed to appeal to him: "adorn'd / With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow / To make her amiable" (VIII.482-484). But, while recalling his initial appreciation of Eve's exterior, Adam verges on blasphemy, because he mentions heaven and grace, but uses them as imagery for earthly beauty: "Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye" (VIII.488). The Messiah radiates divine grace when he mediates for Man (III.138-142). Adam is ascribing to Eve a divine attribute in the same way the Petrarchist love poets impose canonisation onto their beloveds, but Eve is a creature; her appearance affirms God's creative power and reflects the glory of heaven. Looking at Eve, Adam should be reminded of heaven, but he should not think that heaven resides in Eve's creaturely form. Heaven cannot be found in the eye of a beloved. Temperate love, such as Adam advances to the Father (VIII.389-397), effects a refinement of the thoughts, and so brings Man closer to heaven. Adam should not project his adoration of the divine onto Eve; not even as figurative flattery. Raphael reminds Adam of the transforming power of moderate love, explaining that: "love refines /

The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat / In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale / By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend" (VIII.589-592). However, in remembering Eve's creation, Adam responds first to his wife's appearance: it is Eve's beauty, not her conversation, that Adam recalls "infus[ing] / Sweetness into [his] heart" (VIII.474-475).

Placed in a dream-like state, Adam sees God's creative power in operation as he witnesses Eve's creation. Through this dream-observation Adam is given further indicators of how his relationship with Eve should develop. Adam remembers watching as Eve was formed from matter taken from his side. He describes a mortal wound; large, and "streaming fresh" with "[l]ife-blood" (VIII.467). As a result of this experience, Adam is always mindful of the bond he and Eve share, as husband and wife, and as two beings originating from the same primary matter. At their first meeting, Adam cries out "I now see / Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self / Before me" (VIII.494-496), and states that man and woman "shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soul" (VIII.499). Revisiting her own memories of this occasion, Eve recollects that Adam tells her about this; calling her his "individual solace" (IV.486), Adam tells her that in running from him, Eve runs from herself. Adam's reasoning implies that he and Eve are complete only when together, but in saying this, Adam fails to recognise that he and Eve are two separate individuals. Adam does not need Eve in order to exist, her presence in Eden is, for Adam, an additional delight (VIII.364-366, 383-391). Raphael tells Adam that he is "Perfect within, [requiring] no outward aid" (VIII.642). This statement applies to all free agents, Man and angel; all have been made "just and right, / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III.98-99).

They are all individually free, and consequently, individually accountable. The angel makes this statement while assuring Adam that Adam is capable of withstanding the affects of his passion for Eve, if he wills himself to do so. Adam and Eve are individual beings, separate from one another. While they have their creaturely natures and their human form in common, and neither can procreate without the other, each is singly complete, and exercises free will independently. The love Adam and Eve feel towards each other further promotes their relationships with God, but separately, they are sufficient to stand. While Adam's constant awareness that Eve was made from him is essentially good, reaffirming his perception of his position in Creation and his appreciation of God as the source of Creation, Adam allows this awareness to develop immoderately. Adam's identification with Eve as a part of himself begins to eclipse his perception of himself as a creature of God.

Adam's inappropriate identification of Eve as a part of himself compounds with his fear of solitude. Because Adam is almost always accompanied by Eve, he confuses his developing reverence of her with his already articulated fear of being alone. Adam is becoming increasingly dependent on Eve for his happiness for two reasons: the first is because Eve's constant presence insulates Adam from his loneliness, and the second is because Adam's regard for Eve is becoming excessive.

Adam's identification of Eve as an extension of himself begins at the moment he witnesses her creation. Eve remembers Adam claiming her as the other half of his self: "Part of my Soul", and continuing, "I seek thee, and thee claim / *My other half*" (IV.487-488, emphasis added). Eve is not essential to Adam's

survival: she is not the primary source of his happiness; her presence in Eden is an additional delight: "Of fellowship I speak / Such as I seek, fit to participate / All rational *delight*" (VIII.389-391, emphasis added). The making of Eve is, like all of God's creative acts, glorious. The account of Eve's creation in Genesis is devoid of details of any possible physical damage this event may have had on Adam. It focuses instead on divine measures to protect Adam from harm; Adam sleeping, and Adam's flesh being "closed up": "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof" ("Genesis", 2:21). But Adam's perception of the experience of Eve's creation is one of separation, and his version differs significantly even from that of Raphael (VII.529-530). Matter is wrenched from Adam's side, and then shaped into Eve, leaving a gaping wound in Adam. Adam focuses on the physical damage he suffered, describing the gap in his side in gruesome detail (VIII.465-467). From the outset, Adam's account of his relationship with Eve is punctuated by separation. He describes two more traumatic separations from Eve. Although Adam is not physically affected by these later separations, he is emotionally distressed. As his narrative develops, Adam recalls another wound; the loss he feels when he wakes to find Eve gone: "I wak'd / To find her, or for ever to deplore / Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure" (VIII.478-480). Adam said that this loss "left [him] dark" (VIII.478). In *Paradise Lost*, "darkness" implies alienation from God. It exists in the minds of creatures that are in dangerous spiritual positions, and it is a distinguishing characteristic of hell.[7] Having been led

[7] Milton's hell is a dark place. Even the flames that burn in hell radiate only "darkness visible". This reflects the spiritual state of hell's occupants, which are similarly devoid of light: I.59-65; I.70-74; I.211-214.

to Adam by the Word, Eve leaves him for the third time, fleeing, he says, because of her "virtue and the conscience of her worth" (VIII.502). On each of these three occasions, Adam experiences distress as a result of his separation from Eve. While Adam's reactions to these separations are not sinful, or damning, he is in a dangerous state of mind. He is making Eve into an increasingly significant aspect of his happiness.

Adam has described his relationship with Eve in terms that suggest his happiness depends upon her continued presence but then he is unconcerned when Eve withdraws from his conversation with Raphael (VIII.39-63). The narrator describes how, at Eve's departure, "from about her shot Darts of desire / Into all Eyes to wish her still in sight" (VIII.62-63). And yet, Adam shows no signs of distress. The anxiety Adam reports having felt during the earlier separations seems to have been compounded by his consequent feelings of solitude. It was the threat of solitude that first prompted him to ask God for a companion: "In solitude / What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or all enjoying, what contentment find?" (VIII.364-366). Adam is not upset by Eve's latest departure because he has not been left alone; while conversing with Raphael he is not affected by Eve's absence. Adam tells Raphael that "while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n, / And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear / Than Fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to thirst / And hunger both" (VIII.210-213). Adam enjoys the company of his angelic visitor and Eve's departure does not leave him in solitude.

Adam ends his story, and returns his narrative perspective wholly to his present self, with these words: "Thus I have told thee all my State, and brought / My Story to the sum of earthly bliss / Which I enjoy" (VIII.521-523). He has just

described leading Eve to the nuptial bower (VIII.510-520), as if union with her is "the sum of [his] earthly bliss". This phrase is the turning point in Adam's narrative; with these words, Adam moves from his account of recent events to detailing his immediate emotions. Now, Adam enters into an explanation of his feelings for Eve, and shows that he is developing an immoderate love that could become detrimental to his own self-understanding, and his admiration for God.

Adam admits to Raphael that, although conscious of their rightful places in God's hierarchy, he finds himself revering Eve. He observes a difference between the relationship he was prompted to ask for, and the way he feels himself interacting with Eve: he feels vulnerable to her beauty (VIII.532-534, 537-539), and moved by her touch (VIII.528-530). Clearly, Adam is bothered by this disparity, because he describes this vulnerability in terms of weakness (VIII.532-533) or imperfection (VIII.534-537). Adam confesses that, when in the company of his wife, he ignores his reason, and is reluctant to exert his authority over her: "Authority and Reason on her wait" (VIII.554). In fact, by describing his submission in this way, Adam more than denies that he has any control over his authority and his reason, he disowns these faculties. Raphael rightly reprimands Adam for these failings just as he earlier instructed Adam regarding the limits of human inquiry. Rejecting Adam's speculations that he is influenced by a greater force, ("Beauty's powerful glance" [VIII.533], "Nature fail'd in mee" [VIII.534], "so absolute she seems" [VIII.547],) Raphael maintains that Adam can control this situation. The angel repeatedly emphasises that the governance of reason and passion is within Adam's power. He counsels Adam to remember his self-knowledge: "Oft times nothing profits more / Than self-esteem, grounded on just

and right / Well manag'd" (VIII.571-573). Raphael claims that Adam can control his passion for Eve and love her more proportionately by bearing in mind his own self-concept. Raphael further comments that by re-evaluating himself, Adam will reaffirm his place in Creation, and so return to order a situation that has been temporarily askew: "of [the management of self-esteem] the more thou know'st, / The more she will acknowledge thee her Head" (VIII.573-574). Earlier in the conversation, Adam readily accepted his angelic guest's advice, and immediately altered his behaviour accordingly, but this time, Adam replies to Raphael's instruction "half-abash't" (VIII.595). Unaware that his excessive regard for Eve is dangerous, Adam is surprised at the severity and urgency of Raphael's censure. He is uncomfortable as the subject of such harsh criticism, and tries to re-interpret his confession, to appease the angel. Earlier, Adam claimed to be vulnerable to "the charm of Beauty's powerful glance" (VIII.533), and "Transported" (VIII.530) by sexual passion. Now he says that he described emotions he feels, but to which he has not succumbed. Adam says that he is not so moved by Eve's appearance or their sexual relations as he is by her little gestures of affection, although even then, he claims, he retains his reason. But this contradicts his earlier statement to Raphael, that "All higher knowledge in her presence falls / Degraded" (VIII.551-552). The "higher knowledge" Adam describes consists in his own faculties of thought: his "Wisdom" (VIII.552), his "Greatness of mind" (VIII.557), and his "Reason" (VIII.554). In his desire to regain Raphael's approval, Adam is unconsciously dishonest, contradicting his earlier statements and redefining his responses to Eve as tendencies.

Before finishing his visit, Raphael sums up his message to Adam. The angel reminds Adam to prioritise his relationship with God above all others and refers briefly to their talk about excessive and temperate love, explaining the possible connection between Adam's inordinate love for Eve and disobedience, before reiterating the importance of obedience to the divine. During their conversation, Adam demonstrates an originally correct self-knowledge, which has recently developed inappropriately. He expresses concern that his responses to Eve are other than he had been directed to expect, is admonished for failing to control these responses, and he receives further guidance regarding his relationship with Eve and his ideas about himself. At this point in the poem, Adam is sufficiently informed to correct his feelings for Eve and to reconsider his self-perception. His immoderate estimation of Eve has not so far compromised his obedience to the divine, or directly challenged his relationship with God. Furthermore, Adam shows interest in reforming his attitudes to Eve. He solicits more information from Raphael, and asks his guest about angelic love. Clearly, Adam is looking for a model on which he can base his relationship with Eve, not realising that he already has one; the concept of threefold happiness.

In Book IX we discover the couple making preparations to tend the garden. Eve, returning to an issue first mentioned by Adam (IV.623-632), suggests that they may work more efficiently apart. Eve reasons that if they work separately, their labour will not be interspersed with affectionate interaction. Adam approves of Eve's industry in trying to improve their productivity, and praises her wifely concern for him. But, Adam says, Eve's concern is unnecessary; God made Man first for delight (IX.242-243), and so their "sweet intercourse / Of looks and

smiles" (IX.238-239) has divine approval. Adam continues, saying that he and Eve are achieving enough, for now, although they will soon be joined in this task by their offspring. Then, Adam alters the direction of his argument entirely, and attributes to Eve another motive for suggesting the separation; a desire to be relieved of Adam's company. Adam considers parting, briefly, saying "short retirement urges sweet return" (IX.250), but dismisses it. Without him, Eve may come to some harm. Only now does Adam mention the "malicious Foe" (IX.253) about whom Raphael warned him. As the conversation progresses, Adam will develop this idea as one his most demanding reasons for him and Eve to remain together, but his first enumeration of this seemingly important point is delayed, occurring half way through his answer, and is preceded by other, less relevant points. This late introduction implies that Satan's presence in Eden is not Adam's primary reason for disapproving of separation.

Although this speech is intended to be a reply to Eve, Adam does not actually respond to her suggestion that they work apart. He does not engage with Eve's stated motive for proposing they work separately, that being Adam's own concern that the garden is becoming "overgrown" (IV.627), and "mock[ing] our scant manuring" (IV.628). Eve's idea of working apart is a fearful concept for Adam because Adam incorrectly believes that Eve's presence is significant to his happiness. If she leaves him, he will be deprived of her presence, and he will be alone. This fear is subconscious, and Adam is not wholly aware of it as he speaks to Eve, and yet Adam's thoughts are limited by his fear. His entire argument, such as it is, centres on their being together. The direction of Adam's speech is as follows: he addresses Eve, indicating that he thinks she is irreplaceable; he praises

Eve for fulfilling her role as wife; he says that their "sweet intercourse" has divine sanction; their progress is sufficient for their needs; their relationship may benefit from Eve's proposed short absence; separated from Adam, some harm may befall Eve; Satan, motivated by envy for their happiness, intends to harm Adam and Eve; Adam and Eve can best withstand Satan's assault together; Satan's intention is to separate Adam and Eve either from God, or else from each other; and Adam reiterates that they can best resist Satan together (IX.227-266). Finally, Adam returns to their roles in the relationship, insisting that staying together is the appropriate action of an obedient wife and protective husband (IX.267-269). Adam applies his reason, trying to justify his instinct to keep Eve with him, but under these circumstances, Adam's reason is neither free nor sound. His thoughts are inhibited from reasoning accurately because he has already reached the conclusion in his mind.

Adam's argument is a process of false reasoning. It contradicts his earlier statements to Eve. Earlier, Adam expressed concern that the garden was becoming overgrown (IV.623-632), and Eve is thinking about this when she mentions her idea for increased productivity by removing themselves from the primary distraction: one another. But now, Adam contradicts his earlier statement, telling Eve that their present rate of productivity is sufficient for their needs: "These paths and Bow'rs doubt not but our joint hands / Will keep from Wilderness *with ease*, as wide / As we need walk" (IX.244-246, emphasis added). While denying that their level of productivity is a problem, Adam unintentionally uses words that he also used in the speech that he is now contradicting. We know that this is not deliberate because Adam does not directly refute his earlier speech.

Adam's use of imagery of hands at work to maintain Eden occurs in both these speeches, but in the first, the work to be done requires "More hands than ours" (IV.629), whereas in the second, "our joint hands" (IX.244) are sufficient. The phrase "with ease" occurs in both of Adam's speeches (IV.632 and IX.245), although functioning quite differently in each. In the first, Adam states that the abundant growth of Edenic vegetation must be moderated if he and Eve are to walk through Eden "with ease" (IV.630-632). In his later speech, Adam says that, working together, they can control that growth "with ease" (IX.244-245). The pattern of repetition draws attention to the contradictions in Adam's speech. Further examples of reverberation appear in Adam's diction as his conversation with Eve progresses.

Other examples of Adam's inconsistency are not apparent to Eve because she was not privy to the earlier statements he now opposes. Adam's claim that together he and Eve can safely resist Satan, is undermined by his admission to Raphael, that "All [of his] higher knowledge in her presence falls / Degraded" (VIII.551-552). Adam contradicts himself again when he assures Eve that they were originally created "not for irksome toil, but to delight / ... and delight to Reason join'd" (IX.242, 243). Adam emphasises delight as if it was the primary reason for Man's existence. But it is evident that Adam once appraised reason as equal with delight because, when he asked God for a companion, he asked for a creature "fit to participate [in] / All *rational delight*" (VIII.390-391, emphasis added). The difference now is that Adam is valuing the delight he feels for Eve over his reason, and consequently is allowing his reason to wait on his excessive estimation of Eve.

Adam's first response to Eve in Book IX reminds the reader of other, earlier statements, made by Adam and addressed to him by others, that contradict his present argument. Deliberate connections are established through similar word choice, concepts, and phrasing. Adam talks about spiritual and physical sustenance required by Man, and likens their affectionate interactions to food (IX.239-240). He tells Eve that this food is essential to their relationship and so to their well-being:

> Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
> Labour, as to debar us when we need
> Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
> Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
> Of looks and smiles, for smiles...
> ... are of Love the food,
> Love not the lowest end of human life (IX.235-239, 240-241).

Raphael makes a similar comparison during his conversation with Adam, although he compares not love but knowledge with food (VII.126). The angel instructs Adam to govern his appetite, and not to oppress his mind through indulgence (VII.126-130). There are clear parallels in these two conceptualisations, but the reasoned outcomes are opposing. Where Raphael uses the idea to recommend temperance, Adam concludes that this hunger, like others, should be satisfied.

Adam tries to explain that he judges Eve's idea of separation unfavourably because of an additional element of threat, but Eve interprets the criticism as of her. Adam concludes with

> leave not the faithful side
> That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
> The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
> Safest and seemliest by her Husband stays,

Who guards her, or with her the worst endures" (IX.265-269).

Reichert describes these lines as "loving, courteous [and] protective" (88) but apparently fails to fully empathise with Eve as the intended audience of these words.[8] Adam distances himself from the situation by speaking in the third person, using imperatives, and placing too much emphasis on his own strength and Eve's vulnerability. Adam's recommendation that they remain together is delivered in a lecturing tone. Like Reichert, Adam is surprised by the effect his words have on Eve. Evidently, Adam lacks the insight to anticipate the effect of his words until Eve responds "As one who loves, and some unkindness meets" (IX.271). Adam fails to recognise that Eve is a separate individual, a being with needs and desires of her own. He does not comprehend that Eve, although issuing from his side, is an independent being with a self-concept distinct from his own.

Finally realising the impact of his first speech on Eve, Adam begins his second reply "with healing words" (IX.290), and repetitively affirms her innocence (IX.291-301). But his attempts to placate Eve are still secondary to his need to keep her with him. This speech is filled with more unsound reasoning and contradicting echoes and reverberations. Now Adam introduces a new concept of injury, that of dishonour. The honour Adam describes is the acknowledgement of an individual's worth by another, and so is not consistent with the type of heroism, namely compliance to the divine will, heralded by the poem. Adam tells Eve that

[8] An example of Reichert refusing to empathise with Eve: "What goes on in Eve's mind here we cannot know, and cannot guess at without imposing greater certainty on the dialogue than Milton wishes us to possess. What we know is simply that Eve construes Adam's remarks as an "unkindness", choosing not to hear the affection in his tone but to hear instead what is also, implicitly, there: the negative but logical corollary of his protectiveness" (89). Reichert is less reluctant about "imposing greater certainty" onto Adam's part of this dialogue.

he hopes to preserve her from the moral taint of being "suppos'd / Not incorruptible of Faith" (IX.297-298), "For hee who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses / The tempted with dishonour foul" (IX.296-297). But he is investing unfitting significance into the way one is perceived by another, especially by a creature like Satan, who has rejected God in favour of his own will. Adam should respond now as he did to Eve's bad dream, when he said that "Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (V.117-119). In both cases, Adam tries to reassure Eve by applying his reason to the circumstances at hand, but the two situations differ. In the first, Adam addresses himself to an external problem - the dream is beyond his and Eve's control - and he acts to conciliate Eve. In the second, Adam, by attempting to use his reason, creates and then exacerbates the problem. In the conversation in Book IX, Adam is, himself, the cause of Eve's distress. The argument he now puts forward is clearly not correct because it is not validated by other episodes in the poem. His earlier claim that evil cannot affect the mind unless allowed to do so is supported by Raphael's narration of the War in Heaven. Abdiel heard Satan's slanderous claims about God, but refused to accept them (V.896-903). The Father praises Abdiel for his steadfast loyalty in spite of peer pressure to revolt (VI.29-37). So, Adam's claim about the moral taint of temptation, even if resisted, is not consistent either with his own ideas expressed earlier, or with prior events in the poem. Here, Adam's assertion about the influence of evil is determined by his desire to retain both Eve's goodwill and her company.

Adam argues illogically. He says that Satan's attempt on Eve would not be successful, but that it would hurt Eve (IX.293-301). But Satan cannot hurt

Adam and Eve in any way other than by disturbing their relationships with God. Adam does not dispute Eve's point that Satan cannot hurt them physically: "His violence thou fear'st not, being such, / As wee, not capable of death or pain, / Can either not receive, or can repel" (IX.282-284). Adam compromises his higher knowledge for temporal circumstance; he wants to remain with Eve; all else is secondary to this desire.

Returning to the idea of action that has to be validated by an audience, Adam tells Eve that he derives strength from her presence, and that he could not sin in front of her:

> I from the influence of thy looks receive
> Access in every Virtue, in thy sight
> More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
> Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
> Shame to be overcome or over-reacht
> Would utmost vigour raise, and rais'd unite (IX.309-314).

This statement is not consistent with the confession Adam made to Raphael, where he said that "Wisdom in discourse with her / Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows" (VIII.552-553). Now, Adam claims the opposite; he tells Eve that even if he were not sufficient to stand, he could draw strength from Eve. Put another way, Adam implies that Eve reinforces his ability to withstand Satan's temptation. Adam is trying to convince Eve to stay with him by making her feel bad about separation, but this type of pressure is not necessary. Adam has only to exert his rightful authority, and Eve will obey his command without question (IV.635-637). Adam is reluctant to command his beautiful companion to do something that seems contrary to her will. Instead, he pressures Eve to change her mind, asking why she should not gain strength from his presence as he does from her.

Adam thinks that virtuous action only has value if that action is seen by another. Concluding this speech, Adam insists, again, that Eve stay with him, explaining that he can then witness and approve of her successful resistance of Satan's temptation. Adam asks Eve why she would seek trial alone, and therefore without witnesses to see and affirm her virtue: "thy constancy... /...who can know, / Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?" (IX.367, 368-369). Adam places too much emphasis on appearances. Raphael reprimanded Adam for his undue consideration of appearances in Book VIII. The angel criticised Adam for "áttribúting overmuch" (VIII.565) to Eve's "outside" (VIII.568). But in spite of Raphael's patiently repeated "no outward aid require" (VIII.642), Adam tells Eve that, under her gaze, he will be even more resistant to temptation and that to be overcome while she looks on would be shameful (IX.309-314). Here, Adam has inadvertently returned to the concept of honour as an evaluation by another. Evidently, Adam has not considered Raphael's words fully, because he now doubts the value of a successfully resisted but unseen temptation, as if action is only valid when perceived by another.

Eve tests the rationale of each of Adam's points in turn and, finding none of them sound, remains unconvinced of his main point, that they must stay together. Eve tells Adam that his argument for remaining together is wrong, explaining that if Adam's account of their present situation is correct, then their "happy State" (IX.337) is questionable. Eve's doubt prompts a spirited response from Adam. During this speech, Adam reinforces Eve's position in their debate by implying that her motives are questionable and thus attacking her integrity. Before doing this, though, Adam fortifies his own position, by aligning himself with God

and divine truth (IX.351-358, 364-368). Finally, he argues in accordance with his claimed motive for staying together: that Satan's presence in Eden is a potential threat to their relationship with God. Adam changes the direction of his justifications, repeating those warnings he received from Raphael that he had been inadvertently distorting. Adam reminds Eve that God is perfect; God made Man free and happy, Man's happiness is dependent upon maintaining his relationship with God; to remain free, obedient and happy, Man must apply reason (IX.342-363). Adam re-emphasises his earlier statement that he and Eve will be safest together, claiming that he is moved to speak now, as always, out of "tender love" for Eve (IX.357). Then Adam reproaches Eve. He declares that it is better not to seek out temptation, and better yet to avoid it all together and, by making this assertion, Adam implies that Eve's desire to be away from him is really a selfish aspiration to prove her obedience to God unnecessarily. Casting doubt on Eve's motives for suggesting that they work apart makes her proposal appear less sincere than Adam's own. This tactic is underhand, and unnecessary because commanding Eve to remain by his side is within Adam's power, if he genuinely believes that staying together is best.

And then, in spite of an apparently determined stance on the issue of separation, Adam capitulates. Adam's sudden yielding is contrary to the argument he has put forward, that he and Eve should stay together, and so is inconsistent with his perception of the situation. The validity of Adam's position in this debate is not relevant here; what is relevant is that Adam acts contrary to his assessment of the situation. Adam's behaviour in this scene is not, within itself, consistent, but it is always the product of his self-perception, which is developing inappropriately.

We know that Adam's change is not based on the persuasiveness of Eve's arguments, since it occurs late in Adam's speech, and without direct reference to any of Eve's points. Nor is Adam's change of mind due to the introduction of new information, as we know for the same reasons. Adam's deference is motivated by a desire to avoid emotional estrangement from Eve. When faced with either a physical or an emotional separation from Eve, Adam compromises his authority, ignores his self-knowledge, overthrows his argument, and chooses the option he perceives to be most beneficial to his relationship with Eve. He tells Eve to "Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (IX.372). Adam thinks that if he presses his authority, Eve will be unhappy with him for an unpredictable length of time, whereas, if he succumbs to Eve's will, and allows her to go, he can retain her favour, and impose limits on her time away from him. Still, Adam is full of misgivings about this separation, as is affirmed by his longing stare and frequent reminders that Eve return at the agreed time (IX.397-400). Adam's decision to allow Eve to go is not sound, being dictated by his feelings for her, but it does not compromise his relationship with God. Choosing to appease Eve, Adam overrules his reason, but has not yet chosen to act against God. Adam's disposition, although potentially sinful, is still reversible at this time.

In spite of Adam's own reservations, some critics have defended the reason he gives for allowing Eve to go. Thomas Blackburn refuses to admit any degree of error on Adam's part, blandly asserting that "When Adam lets Eve go on the fatal morning, he neither forces her obedience nor yields his reason to her beauty" (131). Obviously Adam does not force Eve's obedience; he refuses to test Eve's obedience by articulating a command. And this abstinence from authority is

contrary to the conclusions Adam has drawn about the situation. Reichert justifies Adam's conduct here as appropriate to his place in God's hierarchy: "As God (and Raphael) are to him, so he is to Eve. After warning her fully (as God had warned them both) he rightly insists upon her freedom" (93). Reichert asserts that Adam's "'Thy stay, not free, absents thee more' [IX.372]" parallels on a human level the divine "'What praise could they receive? / What pleasure I from such obedience paid, / When Will and Reason ... had serv'd necessity, / Not me' [III.106-111]" (93-94). McColley also likens Adam's position of superiority over Eve to God's over Man. She explains that it is the duty of the higher being to reinforce the freedom of his inferiors "not by force, but by education" (117). McColley continues: "God continually holds open the opportunity for right responses, and for man to limit this opportunity is tyranny" (118). But Blackburn, Reichert, and McColley all fail to recall that, although Milton's God is determined to preserve Man's freedom, he also offers Man more guidance than just an extensive "warning", or "education". God specifically commands Man not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:

> But of the Tree whose operation brings
> Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
> The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith,
> Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
> Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
> And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
> The day thou eat'st thereof, *my sole command*
> Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt die (VIII.323-330, emphasis added).

Man is still free; Adam and Eve have the freedom to choose whether to obey this divine command or not. Adam should, in good conscience, command Eve not to

go because he has argued that their remaining together is important. An order will not inhibit Eve's freedom; she must still choose how she will react to an expressed authority. But, in spite of what he earnestly believes is best for himself and his wife, Adam refuses to exert his authority contrary to Eve's wishes. Here we see Adam allowing his excessive estimation of Eve to affect his judgement in a situation that he has previously assessed as critical. He is reluctant to place his rightful authority between himself and Eve. By acquiescing in Eve's request that she work away from him, Adam regains Eve's goodwill and a degree of power over the situation without further confrontation. Summers also finds these motivations behind Adam's sudden change of mind (174). Although approving of Adam's reasoning until this moment, Summers disapproves of Adam's final decision, reiterating Adam's own point, that Adam is his wife's protector.[9] But Summers repeats Adam's erroneous assessment of the situation as pertaining only to Eve's safety. Like Adam, Summers fails to understand that Adam's decision to act contrary to his reasoning is self-damaging. Adam resigns from his place in God's order. By backing down from his confrontational stance, Adam imposes conditions on Eve's absence without needing to articulate his authority: "Oft he to her his charge of quick return / Repeated" (XI.399-400). And Eve agrees to his

[9] Summers says of Adam that, "In his anxiety about Eve's attitude towards him, in his passion which makes him wish to see her absolute and superior to himself, he dismisses his knowledge and his reason. He sees the question of their separation not as potentially involving Eve's (and his) destruction, but as if it merely concerned whether she is 'with him' at this moment. He is and knows that he is Eve's protector; but now he cares more for her immediate approval of him than he does for her ultimate safety; he prefers the risk of her destruction to the risk of her momentary resentment" (174).

restrictions: "shee to him as oft engag'd / To be return'd by Noon amid the Bow'r" (IX.400-401).

Adam, by refusing to command his wife, fails to emulate God. Renouncing his rightful authority, Adam displaces himself in the divine order. Although it is not Adam's intention to advance himself, as Satan would, by abstaining from commanding Eve, he still acts to disrupt the divine order. Lewis says that

> The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every [created] being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of this twofold task we have disease or monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected.... [F]or by stepping out of its place in the system... it has made the very nature of things its enemy (72-73).

Adam's reverence for Eve continues to develop while he waits for noon, and her return. His next entrance in the narrative immediately follows Eve's act of idolatry. Eve worships the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as if the tree was a divine being. Adam, meanwhile, is waiting for Eve. He has filled his lonely morning missing Eve, thinking about her return and weaving her a crown of flowers, "to adorn / Her Tresses" (IX.840-841). But Eve requires no ornament for her hair:

> Shee as a veil down to slender waist
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
> As the Vine curls her Tendrils, which impli'd
> Subjection (IV.304-308).

Eve's hair is "unadorned". Eve is "in naked beauty more adorned, / More lovely than Pandora" (IV.713-714). As a creature of God, Eve needs no further ornament

or adornment, especially from another created being. That Adam has prepared a garland of flowers as a crown to adorn his wife's hair is disturbing. In *Paradise Lost*, characters are adorned in recognition of their places in Creation, and their righteousness through obedience to God. The Son states that Eve's exterior was designed to signify her place in Eden as Adam's help meet: "Adorn'd / She was indeed, and lovely to attract / Thy Love, not thy Subjection" (X.151-153). Adornment divorced of righteousness is idolatrous. Satan's cohorts will encourage fallen men to

> forsake
> God their Creator, and th'invisible
> Glory of him, that made them, to transform
> Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorn'd
> With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold,
> And Devils to adore for Deities (I.368-373).

Adam's preparations represent a ritualised surrender of his authority, and an act of idolatry similar to that recently committed by Eve. This is emphasised by the narrator, who says that Adam intends to decorate Eve in the same spirit "As Reapers oft are wont their Harvest Queen" (IX.842). This simile is morally ambiguous because the ritual of crowning a harvest queen is pagan in origin, and so a product of postlapsarian Man. The garland with which Adam intends to crown Eve is not only a symbol of power and authority, it is also an accoutrement of worship. Trappings of worship have no place in the value systems of heaven or Eden; the only place that these symbols of prestige exist is hell:

> High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Show'rs on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,

Satan exalted sat (II.1-5).

In contrast, the narrator's muse, who affirms the values promoted in the poem, "prefer[s] / Before all Temples th'upright heart and pure" (I.17-18). The crown that Adam has made for Eve shows that he is thinking about Eve in a way that should be reserved for God only. Adam prioritises his relationship with Eve to such an immoderate degree that it now rivals his relationship with God.

Having developed a priority that rivals his appreciation for his Maker, Adam is placed in a position where he must choose one over the other. Ideally, Adam's decision of whether or not to eat the fruit that he has been expressly forbidden to eat should have nothing to do with his feelings for Eve. That Adam considers the effect his choice could have on his relationship with Eve is symptomatic of his inaccurate self-perception. Frye says that when Eve challenges Adam's relationship with God by inviting him to eat the forbidden fruit and disobey the divine command, Adam should rightfully end his relationship with her. "When Eve, after her fall, comes to Adam and urges him to fall with her, that is the point at which Adam should have 'divorced' Eve, hence the argument for divorce comes into the very act of the fall itself." (68-69).[10] Adam's self-knowledge has

[10] "Milton's argument for divorce is really an argument for annulment, that is, an argument that if the relations between man and woman are intolerable, no marriage, in the gospel sense, has really taken place. The marriage Jesus describes as indissoluble is a lifetime companionship that can be consummated, or finished, only by the death of one of the partners. The union of Adam and Eve in Eden is the pattern of such a marriage, but not every legalized sex act in the fallen world achieves that pattern. But the argument for annulment really resolves itself into an argument against idolatry. The man has the right to divorce his wife (or the wife the husband) if she is a threat to his spiritual integrity, and she cannot be that without representing something of what idolatry means to Milton. When Eve, after her fall, comes to Adam and urges him to fall with her, that is the point at which Adam should have 'divorced' Eve, hence the argument for divorce comes into the very act of the fall itself." (68-69).

altered dramatically since his original understanding of his creaturely nature, when he correctly owed to God his happy state (VIII.278-282). Now, Adam thinks that his happiness depends on Eve. He inappropriately visualises his choice solely in connection with Eve. To Adam, the choice is between a future with his wife, and a future bereaved of her and, he says, there is only one viable option: "some cursed fraud / Of enemy hath beguil'd thee... / And mee with thee hath ruin'd, for with thee / Certain my resolution is to Die; / How can I live without thee[?]" (IX.904-905, 906-908). Adam overlooks the threefold nature of his happiness (VII.625-632),[11] thinking instead that his happiness revolves around Eve. He chooses to join his wife in a state of disobedience, preferring to renege on his relationship with his Maker rather than risk losing her.

But before committing himself to disobedience and death, Adam adopts further self-deceptions. Tillyard describes this change as a "mental levity" that is symptomatic of Adam's as yet unconsummated commitment to sin (262). But Adam has not yet eaten the forbidden fruit; the deterioration we observe in his thought is not the product of sin, it is preparation for it. Adam deconstructs everything he knows to accommodate this decision, making it appear not only feasible, but also necessary. Before this moment, any inaccuracies in Adam's self-knowledge have been unintentional, but now Adam consciously and deliberately adapts his understanding to allow for his decision to fall. Already, he has employed a fiction, negating his own free will by equating Eve's fall with his own (IX.906-

[11] Adam and Eve are "thrice happy"(VII.631); they are happy, they are aware that they owe this happiness to God, and they understand that the continuation of this happiness depends upon them.

916). Adam pretends that he does not have a choice; that the situation is not only outside of his control, but that he is compelled to action by circumstances.

Having already made his choice, Adam turns to Eve, and analyses the situation. He presents a compromised view of his predicament, attempting to make his intended action seem reasonable. Adam systematically undermines the seriousness of his proposed action, and the divinely ordained consequences of that action, and he affirms his choice to eat the fruit and so match his future with Eve's. To achieve this, Adam constructs a false understanding of God, Creation, and himself. Adam doubts God's omnipotence, his justice, and his intention to carry out the ordained sentence, death, which would mean the destruction of Man. Adam develops an egocentric understanding of his position in Creation. He invests too much significance in Man's place in Creation, citing this as a reason for God's reluctance to destroy Man. He claims that, since Creation was made for Man, God will have to destroy that too. Overriding his divinely engrafted understanding that enables him to comprehend animal natures (VIII.352-354), Adam marks the changes that the forbidden fruit has apparently effected on the Serpent, and wrongly assumes first, that the Serpent, like Man, has been prohibited from eating this fruit, and second, that Man will experience changes proportionally similar to those Eve observed in the Serpent. These assumptions contravene Adam's earlier deduction, that Man is significantly different from the animals (VIII.389-397). Finally, Adam articulates a false understanding of himself, claiming that, because Eve has chosen death, and he chooses Eve, "Death is to mee as Life" (IX.954). Adam categorically denies his free-will, and his creaturely nature, that led him, newly made, to inquire about his Maker (VIII.270-282), so as to assert that he is

drawn to emulate Eve by an irresistible force, "The Bond of Nature" (IX.956). Adam rejects his own self-understanding to concur with his will to remain with Eve, and he falsely defines his wife as the source of his happiness.

The decision to disobey God is the climactic moment in the progressive development in Adam of an inaccurate self-perception. Lewis, Waldock and Fish cannot be correct in their assertions that Adam's fall is sudden, and without antecedent.[12] From Book IV through to Book IX, we observe Adam's self-understanding alter from an initially correct comprehension. At first, Adam's self-understanding is manifested as a desire to maintain his relationship with God through compliance with the divine command, and an intention to carry out his task of tending the vegetation in Eden with efficiency (IV.412-438). Towards Eve, Adam exhibits respect and affection, discretely tempered with authority. Adam recognises that his happiness is threefold; he is happy, he owes this happiness to God, and he intends to continue his happiness by maintaining his relationship with God. But, after this first scene, we begin to see evidence that Adam's affection for Eve is becoming immoderate. Waking before Eve, Adam dwells on her appearance, and only belatedly notices her distress from a bad dream (V.9-27). Adam first asks for a companion due to his apprehension about solitude, and he gradually confounds this anxiety about being alone with his excessive passion for Eve because she is Adam's only society in Eden most of the time. This reinforces the idea in Adam's mind that Eve is vital to his happiness. The inappropriate development in Adam's understanding of himself has been gradual, and interspersed with opportunities for correction, through conversations with God and

[12] Lewis (122), Waldock (30), and Fish (227-228).

Raphael. By eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam resigns from self-governance, and surrenders his will and his reason to his excessive passion for Eve. He wilfully destroys his original innocence and his mental faculties. Adam's disobedience involves the rejection of his reason, the faculty given to him by God to enable him to make informed, but free decisions. Adam alters his originally correct self-knowledge, and effectively denies the concept of threefold happiness by failing to observe it. He wilfully surrenders to his reverence of Eve and his fear of solitude in spite of corrective guidance. Adam's fall is wilful, and is due to a gradually developing inaccurate self-understanding.

Chapter Four: Eve

During the dispute that succeeds their fall, Eve turns to Adam and asks "Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head / Command me absolutely not to go, / Going into such danger as thou said'st?" (IX.1155-1157). Eve implies, through the phrase "Being as I am", that her nature excuses her from being accountable for her disobedience. Eve insinuates that she is in some way inferior to Adam, that Adam, as her protector, should not have allowed her to leave him, and that she cannot be held accountable for what happened while she was away from him. Many critics have echoed this attitude.[1] However, as we shall see, although inferior to Adam in the divine hierarchy, Eve is as capable of continued obedience to God as Adam. Prior to the fall, Eve thinks of herself not essentially as a creature inferior in nature to her husband, but rather as a creature who, by maintaining her relationship with God and exploring her place in Creation, can further increase both her understanding and her appreciation of God and his works. Eve, like Adam and all the angels, has been made sufficient to stand. From Raphael she hears that Man is capable of advancement, and by developing an appropriate relationship with God

[1] Musacchio asserts that Milton's Adam and Eve are only sufficient to stand when together (80). He also talks about Adam's intellectual superiority to Eve (79-80), concluding that "of course Milton's inferior Eve (e.g., VI.909) is incomplete apart from Adam." (79). Albert Fields thinks that Adam and Eve together form one self, "Adam-Eve", Adam being the "rational", and Eve the "baser" self. Fields understands the fall as resulting from Adam withdrawing his governing influence over Eve, and then subordinating himself to her. He explains that "the rational self should rule the passional nature. But Adam-Eve, as it were, became Eve-Adam and in so doing, exposed an "inward nakedness" of self "much more opprobrious" in the "Father's sight" (X.221-223)" (397). AJA Waldock asserts that Eve's disobedience stems from her intellect, which is "weaker" and "more deceivable than Adam's" (33).

could eventually ascend to heaven (V.493-503). Preserving and extending her happiness by obeying God and fulfilling her role as wife to Adam are the primary motives behind all of Eve's actions until late in her conversation with Satan.

Eve's first appearance in the narrative occurs in Book IV (IV.288). She is described as one of a pair of creatures that are distinct in bearing from the animals in Eden: "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect" (IV.288-289). But Eve is not, at first, distinguished from her mate, Adam. The divine attributes "Truth", "Wisdom", and "Sanctitude" (IV.293) apply to them both. It is not until the narrator has listed those features that set Man apart from the animals that he moves to the finer variance between Adam and Eve. These differences are distinctions in gender, and in dynamics of authority: "For contemplation hee and valour form'd, / For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace, / Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (IV.297-299). Their distinguishing characteristics are complementary: Adam's "valour", the exertion of inner principles over external forces, is balanced by Eve's "softness", a receiving or accepting quality. These traits are manifested in the way Adam and Eve are to relate to one another. Adam has authority over Eve just as Man has authority over the animals, because he is placed higher in the divine hierarchy. The observance of authority maintains order in God's universe. Eve's righteousness and willingness to accept her husband's authority is a way for her to obey God, but her obedience to Adam is dependent on his own continued obedience to God. Adam's authority over Eve is only viable as long as he acts in accordance with the divine will. Through Adam Eve learns about and first develops an appreciation for her Maker. Man learns discursively (V.488-

489), making Eve, with her independent reasoning, a valuable participant in the development of Adam's as well as her own appreciation of God.

Eve is primarily concerned with developing further understanding of self. In her first speech in the poem, Eve recalls her memories of her first moments – her initial self-discovery. By retelling the story of her own beginning, Eve affirms her knowledge of herself and her understanding of her place in God's universe. Her awakening involves similar elements to Adam's first moments, differing only in details. Like Adam, the newly made Eve is filled with questions about herself, but where Adam inquired about his origin, Eve wonders about her place in Creation. Eve wants to know her identity, or role in the universe, and her location, that is, her physical place in the universe, and her process of arrival. She recalls:

> That day I oft remember, when from sleep
> I first awak't and found myself repos'd,
> Under a shade on flow'rs, much wond'ring where
> And what I was, whence thither brought, and how (IV.449-452).

The succeeding scenes are a continuation of the process of Eve discovering and accepting the answers to these questions. Place and purpose are frequent topics in Eve's conversation. She is always, as now, interested in further increasing her knowledge of her self because this enables her to fulfil her role in God's universe to an ever-higher degree. Everything Eve does is motivated by this drive to develop her self-understanding.

Evidently, in the period between her first experiences and the time when Eve relates this memory to Adam, in Book IV, she has developed an understanding of herself and her place in God's order. During the opening lines of her response,

Eve describes her relationship with Adam, and demonstrates an understanding of the process of her creation, and her purpose in Eden. She says:

> 'O thou for whom
> And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh,
> And without whom am to no end, my Guide
> And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.
> For wee to him [God] indeed all praises owe,
> And daily thanks' (IV.440-445).

The newly created Eve responds to sound, and just as Adam followed the divine voice of his dream (VIII.292-311), Eve follows the first sound she hears, to discover her reflection in the water. Unlike Adam, Eve does not receive an immediately comprehensive answer to her questions. This is significant because Eve is like Adam in that she reasons discursively (V.488-489). Social interaction through conversation is the way Eve processes information, but she receives her first personal interaction, with Adam, late in her first moments of self-discovery. Eve's first actions are her search for interaction. Her acceptance of Adam is the result of her realisation of this need.

Eve's encounter with her image has been interpreted both as a sinful tendency towards narcissism, or an essentially innocent self-discovery. Bell cites this episode, which she interprets as Eve sinfully looking in the mirror and liking what she sees, as evidence that Eve is not perfect before the fall (871). Barry Gross interprets Eve's attempts to interact with her image as worship, and finds her "guilty of self-love" (97). But Gross ascribes post-lapsarian motives to Eve to support his reading, that her relationship with Adam is compromised by self-love long before either of them explicitly disobeys God, contrary to the central thesis of prelapsarian perfection. And James Earl asserts that narcissism is the primary

motive behind Eve's every action. He says that when she is led away from her reflection in the pool, she seeks to replace it with an alternative image of herself, Adam. Opposing this view, Musacchio dismisses the idea that the attention Eve pays to her image might demonstrate inherent sinfulness in the form of narcissism. He maintains that this episode is "a matter of learning through the God-instituted process of trial and non-moral error" (94). While Musacchio argues that Eve's response to her "beautiful image" is not sinful or bad, he nevertheless perceives it as an "error" (93, 94). Hermine van Nuis, applying a psychoanalytical interpretation, sums up this episode as "literally, and figuratively" a "self-examination" of "psychological growth" that is interrupted by Adam, only to be continued later, when Eve suggests separation (50). But there is no evidence here or in the later scene of Eve searching for what van Nuis describes as "the freedom to become a consciously differentiated being" (50). And Fish argues that the wary reader should resist the temptation to remember the story of Narcissus while reading about Eve's reactions to her reflection (218-219). The point of this episode, Fish insists, is to show Eve learning to appreciate Adam's "manly grace" (IV.490), and to create opportunities for the reader to make an "interpretative choice" by not comparing or contrasting Eve to Narcissus (218, 216). But actually, none of these critics accounts for the consequences of the fact that Eve does not know she is facing an image of herself reflected in the water. While some critics observe this fact in passing, they fail to account for it in their analysis of the episode.[2] Eve thinks that she is looking at another being, she does not associate the reflection with herself, and so her attraction to her image is not a connection

[2] For examples of this, see Musacchio (93), and Farwell (14).

with herself. Her curiosity about what she believes is another being is a positive thing because it demonstrates a desire to connect with others. Eve tries to establish a relationship with this new being. Her desire to interact with other beings eclipses her curiosity about herself. Eve is not self-absorbed. Her interest in her reflection shows that she wants to extend beyond herself and connect with another being.

Adam expressed a similar interest during his conversation with his Maker, asking for a companion, a creature like himself, capable of rational thought, with whom he might converse. Eve interacts with her image as if it were another being until she is led towards a real other being, Adam. But at first Adam does not speak to Eve, so her initial impression of him is visually orientated. Eve notices that Adam does not look like the reflection she saw in the water. She explains that she found him "less fair, / Less winning soft, less amiably mild, / Than that smooth wat'ry image" (IV.478-480). As a result of this, Eve perceives Adam as distinctly other, and finds his foreignness less appealing. She turns away from Adam, causing him to pursue her. Eventually, Adam addresses Eve directly, as her reflection did not, and informs her of her identity, her location, and how she came to exist. Eve's acceptance of Adam is also an acceptance of his account of her. In speaking, Adam demonstrates "manly grace / And wisdom" (V.490-491), prompting Eve to revise her initial assessment of him. Eve learns that she prefers this newly discovered intellectual grace to mere physical beauty: "I yielded, and from that time see / How beauty is excell'd by manly grace / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (IV.489-491). Adam's reason creates opportunities for rational interaction, in contrast to the limited responses offered by her reflection. This realisation is vital to the development of Eve's self-knowledge. She, like Adam,

learns through conversation; social interaction is not merely an additional pleasure in Eden, it is necessary for Eve's intellectual development. Learning this about herself has furthered Eve's self-understanding.

The Word leads Eve to Adam. It is through the same divine source that Eve learns that what she has mistaken for another being is only a reflection of herself. From the Word Eve discovers that she is the image of another, that she may form a relationship with this being, and that she will bear him offspring. But Eve is not told anything more about herself by God. The divine voice does not identify itself, its relationship to her, or even give her a name, instead calling her "fair Creature" (IV.468). And Eve has no opportunity to engage with this voice. The sparse information offered here by the Word encourages Eve to turn to Adam as a source. Adam calls Eve by her name, and explains his connection with her as she runs from him. Adam describes his memory of her creation and outlines the type of union he would like to forge with her. Through Adam, Eve discovers answers to her first speculations. When Eve allows Adam to grasp her hand, she chooses mutual rational engagement with Adam over limited interaction with her reflection. Eve's relationship with Adam is initiated through discussion and acceptance of her identity. She accepts the complexity of future and past offered by Adam, and so embraces her first measure of self-knowledge.

Eve's perception of her relationship with Adam is the subject of the greater part of her second speech (IV.635-658). During the opening lines Eve explores the dynamics of power and authority within their respective roles in the marriage. She acknowledges Adam as her "Author" and her "Disposer" (IV.635), recognising his participation in her formation, and accepting him as a significant

and guiding figure in her future. And Eve accurately describes her own role in the marriage, with regard to authority and obedience. In response to Adam's recommendation that they retire to sleep, Eve assures her husband that "what thou bidd'st / Unargu'd I obey" (IV.635-636). Having demonstrated an awareness of the balance of authority within the microcosm of her relationship with Adam, Eve expands her model to incorporate God. She says: "so God ordains, / God is thy Law, thou mine" (IV.636-637). She continues: "to know no more / Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise" (IV.637-638). We have already seen that happiness is an important concept in *Paradise Lost*: here, Eve refers to the third aspect of the concept of threefold happiness, "know[ing] to know no more" (IV.775). She has already expressed thoughts consistent with the first two aspects of the concept of threefold happiness. She recognises that she is happy, and that she owes this happiness to God (IV.444-447). The preservation and development of Eve's happiness are subject to her continued obedience to God, part of that being the fulfilment of her role in Eden as wife to Adam.

At the beginning of Book V Adam wakes Eve from a troubled sleep. Even as she lies sleeping it is apparent that something is upsetting her. The physical symptoms of Eve's distress indicate her horror of the dream. On waking, Eve recounts her dream to Adam, but we know quite a lot about this dream even before she speaks. It originates not, as Adam concludes, in Eve's fancy, but is generated by Satan. He whispers into Eve's ear as she sleeps, with the intention of "rais[ing] / At least distempered, discontented thoughts, / Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires / Blown up with high conceits engend'ring pride" (IV.806-809). The voice in the dream tries to tamper with Eve's self-knowledge, encouraging her

to develop inappropriate aspirations, similar to Satan's own. The dream challenges Eve's values and attacks the concept of threefold happiness. Satan uses things that Eve has already approved, in order to conceal his identity and his intention. He presents his attempt in a scenario that imitates Eve's earlier learning experiences, fortifying the dream with superficially familiar detail. However, Satan's attempt to introduce sin in a form seemingly familiar and therefore acceptable to Eve is not successful. In actuality, the central action of the dream is strange and frightful to Eve. She tells Adam that she "dream'd / ... not as I oft am wont" (V.31-32). The seemingly familiar elements of the dream are not enough to distract Eve from recognising the central idea as disobedience.

Eve recalls that the dream begins with a voice calling to her (V.35-37). During her formative experiences especially, Eve responded to sound triggers; on first waking, she followed "a murmuring sound / Of waters" (IV.453-454) to discover her reflection; a short time later, "a voice... warn'd [Eve]" (IV.467) of her mistake and led her to Adam (IV.467-476). And Eve only received Adam's advances after he spoke to her. On all three occasions, Eve responded to what she heard. This pattern has become familiar to Eve and she responds now as she has earlier, by following the sound. The dream voice seems even more familiar to Eve because it sounds like that of her husband: "methought / Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk / With gentle voice, I thought it thine" (V.35-37). Eve is accustomed to heeding Adam's voice, and she explains to him that "I rose as at thy call" (V.48). In her experience, Adam has been a reliable source of information. Adam is the being who explains her creation; he gives her guidance concerning her role in Eden and directions for specific action, such as when and why she should

sleep. The relationship Adam has established with Eve makes her increasingly responsive to his voice.

The words addressed to Eve by the dream-voice reinforce her identification of that voice as belonging to Adam. The voice apparently returns to a topic discussed by the pair before Eve retired to sleep: the appropriateness of sleeping at night. Taking up Eve's position from the previous evening's conversation, the voice asks Eve, "'Why sleep'st thou Eve? Now is the pleasant time'" (V.38). Now the voice begins to distort the conversation of the night before. Where Eve had asked Adam why the stars shone at night, when all the creatures in Eden are diurnal, leaving the stars' light unappreciated, the dream-voice lists the nightingale's song and the moonlight as wonders whose beauty is in vain if Eve sleeps through them. Then Eve's suggestion that the celestial lights are not appreciated at night is inverted, and the voice in Eve's dream tells her that those same lights wait on her: "Heav'n wakes with all his eyes, / Whom to behold but thee" (V.44-45). The dream-voice seems to be engaging this subject again.

Other familiar elements appearing in Eve's dream are the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and an angelic being. Again, Eve accepts these as genuine and is reassured by them, until she notices disparities between the dream representations and the originals. Eve wanders to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as she searches for Adam, and would have paid little attention to it, had it not been made uncharacteristically appealing. Her attention is drawn to the Tree and she stops in front of it: "fair it seem'd / Much fairer to my Fancy than by day" (V.52-53). This plant is already familiar to Eve, and her stopping is not motivated by a desire to eat the fruit before her; rather, Eve stops out of curiosity about why

this tree appeals more to her now. She is only distracted by the presence of a figure she quickly recognises: "beside it stood / One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n / By us oft seen" (V.54-56). Eve identifies the being as an angel; a creature superior in nature and knowledge to both herself and Adam; a creature who exists in God's presence.

But these reassuring elements introduce visions offensive to Eve. The angel challenges God's prohibition, then breaks it by eating forbidden fruit, before praising Eve in blasphemous terms and encouraging her to eat too. Eve does not censure the angel directly, but her disapproval is evident, and she is reluctant to eat the forbidden fruit he offers to her. Satan's attempt to pervert Eve's self-perception through the dream is not successful. The narrator explains that Satan's primary goal in whispering in Eve's ear as she sleeps is to alter her self-understanding and arouse inordinate desires similar to those he implanted in his followers, the fallen angels. But Eve's response to Satan's incitement is quite different to that of the now fallen angels. Although she participates in the dream to the extent that she follows his voice, gazes at the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and joins the angelic being in an exhilarating flight after eating the fruit, these actions are not her own. They are imposed on Eve by the dream reality to which she is subject for the duration of her sleep. Within the dream, Eve's physical autonomy is limited, but she retains her own emotional and intellectual responses. The sight of the angelic being eating the forbidden fruit leaves Eve "[with] damp horror chill'd" (V.65). In spite of the reassuringly familiar details present in the dream, Eve is alarmed by the central concepts.

This alarm is manifested as visible signs of distress, signs that could not be deliberately generated by the sleeping Eve because her mind is engaged by the dream. Eve oversleeps, and this is evidently uncharacteristic of her because it surprises Adam. Adam observes his sleeping wife, "With Tresses discompos'd, and glowing Cheek, / As though unquiet rest" (V.10-11). And Eve wakes "with startl'd eye" (V.26). She tells Adam that she is pleased to be released from her dream, and she repeats this at the end of her account (V.29-35 and 92-93). By the time she is woken, Eve has already formed her judgement of the dream, summing up the content as "offence and trouble" (V.34). Eve reiterates this assessment through her reactions to the dream as she tells it to Adam. Clearly, she is made uncomfortable by her participation in the dream-action, because she attempts to distance herself from the actions of her dream-self by frequent use of words like "methought" (V.35, 50, 85, 91), "thought" (V.37), and "wond'ring" (V.54, 89). These words also communicate Eve's confusion at the events in the dream, and at her dream-self's responses to them.

As the dream unfolds, and the encouragement to commit sin becomes explicit, Eve retires from active participation, becoming more of an observer. Her reluctance to do what she does in the dream is apparent even in the halting rhythm of the lines at this point in Eve's account. When describing the moment that the angel offers her the fruit, Eve's narrative suddenly breaks up:

> he drew nigh, and to me held,
> Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
> Which he had pluckt; the pleasant savoury smell
> So quick'n'd appetite, that I, methought,
> Could not but taste (V.82-86).

Eve finds the thought of disobeying God's law, even in a dream, so abhorrent that she resists describing this action overtly, saying only that she "Could not but taste". There are two ways of interpreting Eve's vagueness here; either her dream self refused to eat the fruit, but still tasted it because the angel held it to her mouth, or else she did eat it, and now describes the action in understatement. In either case, Eve's unwillingness to carry out this action is evident from her reluctance to describe herself doing it. As she approaches this moment, she frequently changes tack, resisting the progression in her dream by chopping her narrative up into awkward clauses, as if hoping to avoid remembering the crucial moment. Eve disowns the appetite that responds to the fruit, and she refuses liability for the implied action by saying that the circumstances of the dream compelled her response. Here, Eve is not a willing participant in the dream-action. Disobedience is not at all appealing to Eve, in whatever shape or form, because she recognises it as a disruption of the divine hierarchy, and therefore as contrary to her continued happiness.

The origins and effects of Eve's dream are disputed. Tillyard thinks that the dream is demonically inspired, and that the only reason Eve is not overcome here is "heavenly intervention" (250). But Tillyard apparently fails to recognise the significance of Eve's troubled sleep and her distress after waking. William Hunter, talking about Eve's dream as the first attempt in Satan's campaign, concludes that this attempt is successful because through it Satan influences Eve's fancy, and so prepares her for the fateful conversation he will initiate in Book IX (264-265). H.V.S. Ogden also attributes the origins of Eve's dream to Satan. Ogden talks about Eve's dream as a devil-sent lesson in behaviour, a step in a steady

psychological progression that ultimately leads to Eve's fateful decision to eat the forbidden fruit (314, 320). But neither Hunter nor Ogden makes sufficient allowance for Eve's capacity to resist the sinful ideas Satan introduces to her fancy. And Fish, arguing that Eve's prelapsarian perfection fortifies her from committing sin, even in a dream, refuses to accept that Eve could eat the fruit offered to her in her dream: "Satan is unable to make Eve go through the motions of disobedience, even in her fancy, just as hypnotic suggestion cannot induce actions contrary to one's moral code. The irrevocable gesture is not reported because it does not happen" (222-223). In accordance with his governing theory, Fish asserts that the tendency to think that Eve might sin by eating the forbidden fruit in her dream is actually a trap set by Milton for the unwary reader (222-223). More correctly, Ogden and Musacchio each note that this episode gains ominous menace only with hindsight, and that had Eve resisted Satan's attempt in Book IX, the dream would be regarded as a lesson preparing her for this success.[3] But Ogden undermines his claim by interpreting Eve's dream with her later disobedience in mind. Musacchio, on the other hand, absolves Eve of responsibility for the actions of her dream-self, and dismisses the idea that she is in any way tainted by the dream because the dream is controlled by Satan, and so is not reflective of her waking thoughts (97-101). "Satan inspires the dream; he cannot inspire actual sin" (101). Musacchio correctly emphasises that Eve is not responsible for the actions she performs in her dream, but the conclusions he draws about how the dream affects Eve's self-perception are neutral. He says that although the dream suggests to Eve many possible forms of behaviour, it anticipates none; it is "an opportunity

[3] Musacchio (98), Ogden (310).

for growth *or* deterioration, for virtue *or* sin" (98, emphasis added). He implies that the influence of the dream can only be ascertained by Eve's subsequent behaviour, and then overlooks everything Eve says or does between this incident and Satan's later temptation, in Book IX. But Eve begins to react to the dream as she dreams it, and she continues to respond to it after waking.

Ironically, Satan has inadvertently made his goal, to disrupt Man's relationship with his Maker, more difficult for himself because the dream he inspires in Eve reinforces her determination to continue her obedience to God and preserve her happiness. In the dream Satan invites Eve to develop the type of pride that fuelled his own disobedience; he offers her a new way of thinking about herself. On waking, Eve rejects this invitation. She shares her troubling dream with Adam, who assures her that "Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (V.117-119). Eve does not endorse the evil shown to her in the dream; responding with "horror" (V.65), she shows signs of being upset as she sleeps (V.8-11), and is glad to finally wake from the dream (V.92). The narrator describes Eve's tears, that fall after Adam's comforting explanation of the dream, as "gracious signs of [her] sweet remorse / And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended" (V.134-135). The prospect of disobedience is terrible to Eve because she knows that sin would obliterate her happiness, ending her union with God, and destroying her relationship with Adam and her place in Eden, and the dream confirms this. After discussing the dream with Adam, Eve quickly returns to their daily routine of labouring in the garden, and to working at furthering her self-knowledge. She continues to interact with Adam and fulfil her role in Eden as she did before she had the dream, but now Eve

appreciates what she risks losing if she does not remain obedient. Eve's dream equips her with an appreciation for the warning that Raphael will deliver to her and Adam later on that day: "That thou art happy, owe to God, / That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself, / That is, to thy obedience; therein stand" (V.520-522). But there is no textual evidence that the dream has any long-term negative effect on Eve. She does not mention the dream again, nor are there any echoes or reverberations of the dream in her later speeches.

Eve eagerly returns to their daily task of maintaining Eden, and fulfilling her role as wife to Adam. To this end, she addresses herself to developing more effective arrangements for gardening. Although it is Eve who initiates conversation with Adam at the beginning of Book IX, she is actually reopening a subject that Adam had brought up earlier (IV.623-632). Her suggestion that they might work more efficiently apart is not, as Bell claims, a "sudden unprecedented inclination" to leave Adam (870). As Eve outlines the situation, reverberation of concepts, phrase and word choice connect her speech with the earlier one made by Adam, in which he first introduced his concern that the Eden vegetation is growing faster than the two of them are able to control it. Compare Eve's reference to their daily work in Eden as "Our pleasant task" (IX.207) with Adam's "our pleasant labour" (IV.625). Eve echoes many of the words her husband had used earlier: "more hands" (IX.207, IV.629), "labour" (IX.208, IV.625), "overgrown" (IX.210, IV.627), and "wanton growth" (IX.211, IV.629). And conceptually, her assertion that the plants "deride" (IX.211) Adam's and her efforts by growing back again in a night or two parallels a similar one from Adam, that the overgrown plants "mock

our scant manuring" (IV.628).[4] Furthermore, the problem Eve specifies here is the same one Adam first defined in Book IV. Referring to her husband's concern that the Edenic vegetation grows faster than they can tend it, Eve first asks Adam if he has any solution to this problem, and then offers her own strategy for increasing their efficiency. This deliberation shows that Eve is mindful of the task that God has assigned to her and Adam, and by thinking of ways to maintain the garden more effectively, she is trying to share in this responsibility.

Eve has participated in the decision-making process before; in Book V she amends Adam's direction to "go with speed, / And what thy stores contain, bring forth and pour / Abundance" (V.313-315). Eve explains to her husband that accumulation is unnecessary, except where storage enhances the taste of a fruit (V.322-325). Arguing for moderation, Eve reduces Adam's "abundance" to a selection "from each bough and brake, / Each Plant and juiciest Gourd" (V.326-327). Eve's justification of this correction is sound and Adam allows her to prepare this meal without any further discussion. In Book IX Eve does not assert her idea to work apart as a definitive solution; now, as always, she is ready to discuss the prudence of her proposal. She introduces her idea with "Thou therefore now advise / Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present" (IX.212-213). This is not a command to action; she is asking Adam to listen to her suggestion and respond to it. Eve enjoys reasoning with her husband, and this has been the process by which the pair have contemplated Creation and reached decisions. Conversation is a

[4] These echoes are also observed by van Nuis. But van Nuis concludes that Eve's initial suggestion to work separately is motivated by "deeper issues", and that she deliberately refers to Adam's "serious injunctions" to make this suggestion appear necessary (50-51).

significant part of their relationship, and Eve evidently values these interactions with her husband because during Raphael's visit, she chooses to excuse herself and hear the angel's words later, through Adam (VIII.48-54). But she is also conscious of their duty to God, and prioritises this above "Casual discourse" (IX.223). That Eve's suggestion is motivated by a sense of duty is emphasised by the specific project she nominates for herself: "I / In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt / With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon" (IX.217-219). When Eve excused herself from Raphael's visit, she went to tend her flowers: "[Eve] Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flow'rs, / To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, / Her Nursery" (VIII.44-46). Evidently the flowers in the garden are her particular responsibility, and she takes this responsibility very seriously.

Even so, Eve is receptive to Adam responding to her proposal that they work separately. She suggests a few activities for Adam, but leaves him to make the final decision: "thou where choice / Leads thee, or where most needs" (IX.214-215). Eve is prepared to engage with Adam in analysing her suggestion, to apply their reason to test the soundness of the idea. But Adam does not do this. He praises his wife only for thinking about how they might "best fulfil the work which here / God hath assign'd us" (IX.230-231). He does not specifically address Eve's strategy, let alone consider the benefits of it. As was discussed in greater depth earlier, Adam's response is not at all rational, being motivated by his immoderate love for Eve, and confounded with his fear of solitude. Adam does not consider separation rationally because, to him, it inspires fear and anxiety. He assesses Eve, rather than her idea, and his initial praise of her eventually gives way to insinuations that she is vulnerable without him. Adam begins this gradual criticism

by undermining the concern that first prompted her to speak. He dismisses her concern that their slow progress is a problem:

> Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
> Labour, as to debar us when we need
> Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
> Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
> Of looks and smiles....
> .....
> For not to irksome toil, but to delight
> He made us (IX.235-239, 242-243).

However, Eve has heard Adam state otherwise on two earlier occasions. The first occurs in Book IV, where he outlines his concern and prompts Eve to think of a solution (IV.623-632).[5] The second takes place earlier on this same morning, when Adam wakes Eve, saying: "Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field / Calls us, we lose the prime" (V.20-21). This contradiction of his earlier speech is the first in a series of statements that gradually diminishes Eve's confidence in Adam, and confounds her understanding of herself. Eve does not comment on Adam's inconsistencies in her reply, however: the accusations her husband now makes affect Eve greatly, causing her to respond to them immediately.

Nothing in her prior experience has prepared Eve for Adam's defensive reaction to her idea. After emphasising the joy of being together, Adam interprets Eve's suggestion that they would work more efficiently apart as a concealed desire to escape from him. He refers to Eve's proposed departure as a severing (IX.252), implying that separation is an unnatural state, and claims that, without him, Eve

[5] Adam contradicts this earlier speech (IV.623-632). For an analysis of the reverberating phrases and echoing word choice linking the two speeches, see the discussion of this episode in the previous chapter (85-86).

could come to some unspecified harm. Searching for something that could pose such a threat, Adam belatedly reminds her of Satan, that "malicious Foe / Envying our happiness" (IX.253-254). But the delayed disclosure of Satan's presence in Eden implies that this seemingly important point is not Adam's primary reason for disapproving of separation.[6] Eve is understandably indignant at his inference that alone she is not capable of resisting Satan (IX.251-256). Adam doubts her, ascribing to her an unwarrantable degree of vulnerability (IX.251-256, 265-269). Because Eve did not hear Adam's confession to Raphael she cannot know that Adam is prompted to make these unfair statements out of immoderate love for her. From Eve's perspective, Adam's concluding statement is a dual criticism of her idea and of her motives for speaking, as if in proposing to work away from him, she is acting contrary to her role as wife: "The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks, / Safest and seemliest by her husband stays, / Who guards her, or with her the worst endures" (IX.267-269). Eve only knows that her husband's criticism is not compatible with either the intention behind her suggestion or, at a more generalised level, with her understanding of herself. Eve had thought to carry out her role as wife, and their shared role as gardeners of Eden more effectively, and she is understandably hurt by Adam's apparent failure to recognise her efforts as virtuous. The narrator describes Eve replying "As one who loves, and some unkindness meets" (IX.271). This alone is enough to undermine Eve's trust in Adam, but the stance he has taken up in their debate is even more detrimental to her estimation of him. In Eve's experience, Adam has been a reliable source of information, until this morning, but now she observes him reasoning badly. It was

[6] See above (84).

through Adam that Eve learnt about her place in Creation, her origin, and about her relationship with God. Now a situation is developing which could force Eve to choose between accepting his inaccurate assessment of her, and revoking her faith in him.

Hoping to redirect the conversation back to a rational consideration of her initial proposition, and thus avoiding the need to choose between her belief in Adam and her understanding of herself, Eve carefully explains the problems in Adam's justification for staying together. Eve has seen no precedent for Adam's behaviour here; it is not consistent with any of their previous interactions. Hurt and taken aback by the personal criticism inherent in Adam's reply, Eve again tries to engage him in a discussion of her idea for increasing their efficiency, not realising that he is not interested in discussing the advantages of them parting. At this stage in their conversation, Adam has not yet commanded Eve to do anything. Eve thinks that they are debating his contention that together they will be safe from sin. She assures her husband that she is sufficiently informed about Satan and his bad intentions, and reminds him that Satan cannot physically harm either of them. Satan's presence in Eden does not, in itself, pose a significant threat to Eve's safety. She explores Adam's concern further, and finds it to be a lack of faith in her, reasoning that if she and Adam are not vulnerable to physical injury, and if Satan can only harm her by convincing her to willingly disobey God, then it is her will, rather than Satan's malice that is the cause of Adam's concern. "His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers / thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love / Can by his fraud be shak'n [sic] or seduc't" (IX.285-287). Eve chastises her husband for this inaccurate appraisal of her very being, saying: "that thou shouldst my

firmness therefore doubt / To God or thee, because we have a foe / May tempt it, I expected not to hear" (IX.279-281). Eve concludes this speech with a question of her own: "Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast, / Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?" (IX.288-289). Although bewildered by Adam's unjust assessment of her, Eve appeals to him for an explanation of his uncharacteristic behaviour. Suddenly, Adam seems no longer to be the more informed and rational being she chose over her reflection. Eve's understanding of herself, which she developed with Adam's help, now conflicts with his more recent assessment of her. She is confused, and seeks resolution.

Unfortunately, Adam's "healing words" (IX.290) only increase Eve's hurt and confusion. He has already equated danger with dishonour (IX.266-267). Now he defines honour as being derived from the way one is perceived by another, irrespective of personal integrity: "[temptation] at least asperses / The tempted with dishonour foul, suppos'd / Not incorruptible" (IX.296-298). But his explanation of honour is contrary to the heroic deeds Eve heard Raphael describe. Diane Benet demonstrates that Eve bases her understanding of heroism on Abdiel's lonely stand against Satan (V.804-907), during which he deliberately resists the pressure of his peers, and refuses to join their rebellion. Abdiel's conduct is heroic even though his audience does not think so. From Abdiel's example Eve learns that the opinions of another cannot compromise her honour; only she can do that, by disobeying God. While Eve likes to confer with Adam, she does not need his sanction of her actions as she does that of God; Adam and Raphael have both explained to Eve that divine approval is vital to her happiness (IV.411-437, V.519-543). Earlier, she had asserted that "wee to him [God] indeed

all praises owe, / And daily thanks" (IV.444-445). While Eve includes her husband as a significant part of her happy circumstances, she owes her happiness to God, not Adam.

Then, Eve witnesses internal inconsistencies in Adam's argument. Shifting from his earlier emphasis that some "harm [could] / Befall thee [Eve] sever'd from me" (IX.251-252), Adam reasons that he needs Eve's presence and support because he is the most likely target of Satan's attack (IX.304-314). Adam returns to his previous definition of honour to claim that his estimation of Eve would prevent him from sinning in her presence (IX.309-314). Finally, he finishes with an emotionally loaded claim:

> I from the influence of thy looks receive
> Access in every Virtue, in thy sight
> More wise, more watchful, stronger....
> .....
> Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
> When I am present, and thy trial choose
> With me, best witness of thy Virtue tri'd (IX.309-311, 315-317).

Here, Adam conceives of their relationship ideally as a type of mutual dependence. This declaration places Eve in a quandary because it involves an implied accusation that if she persists in her desire to be away from Adam, then she does not love him as absolutely as he does her. And, in describing himself as the "best witness of thy Virtue tri'd", Adam imagines himself and his relationship to be Eve's immediate priority, thus supplanting God. This faulty reasoning perplexes Eve, and she addresses this error expressly in her reply, when she names heaven, rather than Adam, as "our witness from th'event" (IX.334).

So, having allowed her husband the opportunity to explain his impaired reasoning, and having received only more evidence of his unsound reasoning and inaccurate understanding in response, Eve now challenges Adam's argument. She is right to think "Less áttribúted to her Faith sincere" (IX.320). Recognising the disparity between her husband's recent estimation of her and her own perception of herself, Eve rejects as defective Adam's account of their situation in Eden. The argument Adam has presented is not condoned by the poem. By exposing the errors in his argument, Eve hopes to correct his faulty reasoning. To this end she demonstrates awareness of the connection between happiness and obedience, and of how this relates to her and Adam's current circumstances. She questions Adam's desire to limit their freedom to avoid trial, and instead asserts that their happiness is dependent upon their free obedience: "Let us not... suspect our happy State / Left so imperfect by the Maker wise, / As not secure to single or combin'd" (IX.337-339). Eve points out that the harm Adam has outlined still does not anticipate sin, she discounts his equation of assault with dishonour and injury, and she correctly identifies God as the only witness of consequence to their actions. Here Eve's and Adam's roles are reversed; Eve corrects Adam's deficient comprehension of the situation. Eve apparently believes that she has addressed the issue conclusively because she ends this speech with an authoritative declaration: "Frail is our happiness, if this [account] be so, / And Eden were no Eden thus expos'd" (IX.340-341). Her finality here does not invite reply.

Satan's belief that Eve is vulnerable is correct, but for the wrong reasons (IX.479-483). Although Eve has corrected Adam's inaccurate representation of their freedom and sufficiency to stand, her self-understanding is confused. Adam,

hitherto her primary source of knowledge about God, Creation, and her being, has undermined his credibility by arguing inconsistently and illogically. And Eve has been hurt by her husband's personal attacks on her integrity, which culminated in him underestimating her capacity and her will to resist sin. Nevertheless, Eve remains conscious of the duty assigned to her by God, and she leaves to tend her flowers, in accordance with her initial proposal. The narrator describes Eve at her task, propping up her flowers, but "mindless the while, / Herself, though fairest unsupported Flow'r, / From her best prop so far" (IX.431-433). Eve is without her husband, but this does not make her "opportune to all attempts" (IX.481). The narrator's description refers to her state of mind at this time. Eve is "unsupported' in her task because Adam allowed her to go only grudgingly, and she knows that he doubts her ability to resist sin alone. She is bewildered by Adam's lack of faith; he is her "best prop", her source of knowledge and support, and suddenly he has retracted his support, and demonstrated erroneous understanding. Even so, Eve is sufficient to stand, as is evident when Satan is temporarily overwhelmed by her goodness, that is, the physical manifestation of her ardent desire to remain obedient to her Maker: "Her graceful Innocence, her every Air / Of gesture or least action overaw'd / His Malice" (IX.459-461).

Eve does not at first notice the Serpent's elaborate advances (IX.495-528). She is engrossed in her task, and she is accustomed to the animals approaching her, friendly and curious (IX.495-528). Satan, in the guise of Serpent, does not begin his address until he has drawn Eve's gaze. He wants her to be struck by the unnatural spectacle of a speaking beast. The first words Eve hears the Serpent utter encourage her to focus on his speech: "'Wonder not, sovran

Mistress'" (IX.532). He continues, but communicates little except immoderate praise. Eve is surprised by this strange phenomenon, and "much marvelling" (IX.551), gives the Serpent all her attention. Of course she is amazed; this beast speaks, and is apparently rational. His existence seems to belie Adam's account of the divine order. The Serpent's address compromises both Eve's belief in Adam's integrity and her confidence in her understanding of Creation, which has been based on information given to her by Adam. Implicit in Satan's flattery is a challenge to Eve's understanding of her place in Creation.

Eve comments first on the fact that the Serpent speaks, rather than on the content of his speech because this is the thing that holds her attention most. She is unable to reconcile this articulate creature before her with her knowledge of the animals in Eden. She wonders to herself "'What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc't / By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?'" (IX.553-554). And then, because she is unable to account for this discrepancy on her own, Eve asks the Serpent for an explanation: "How cam'st thou speakable of mute[?]" (IX.563). The Serpent's excessive flattery has not escaped Eve; she is just less interested in it, mentioning it only briefly. And, rather than engaging the Serpent on this subject to elicit more flattery, Eve challenges him, asking: "how / To me so friendly grown above the rest / Of brutal kind[?]" (IX.563-565). These two questions allow the Serpent to give his fictional account of eating the forbidden fruit, becoming articulate and rational, which in turn leads to his refined appreciation for Eve. And although the Serpent's story is entirely fictional, he seems to answer Eve's queries in a way that Adam did not, even though Satan does not know about Eve's recent debate with Adam, or about Eve's confusion and

indignation upon discovering that Adam has underestimated her. He engages Eve in conversation as she had hoped to engage Adam. Eve receives the Serpent's story with wonder and is eager to learn more about this unfamiliar fruit. She asks, "where grows the Tree, from hence how far?" (IX.617). Her interest here is entirely appropriate. Mindful of her responsibility to maintain Eden, Eve wants to know more about the plants in her charge,[7] and as a creature of God, she is trying to expand her knowledge of, and appreciation for, his works. Eve is also interested in the effect the fruit has had on the Serpent. Satan's description of the fruit is deliberately obscure. He does not give any details that could associate this fruit with the forbidden fruit or sin. Raphael told Eve and Adam about a time when "from these corporal nutriments perhaps / Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit, / Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend / Ethereal" (V.496-499). Eve's current interest in this fruit that allegedly caused these transformations in the Serpent derives from the angel's claim that improved self-knowledge and a greater appreciation of God could result in the future elevation of Man, as long as Man was obedient (V.501).

Again, the Serpent seems ready to answer Eve's questions. Once more Eve refutes the Serpent's flattery, dismissing it scornfully as a poor demonstration of his newly developed reason: "thy overpraising leaves in doubt / The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first prov'd" (IX.615-616). The Serpent's intemperate compliments do not alter Eve's self-perception. She accepts the Serpent's offer to show her the tree he has described, and follows him to the Tree of Knowledge of

[7] Musacchio makes a similar observation, but thinks that this interest distracts Eve from "pursu[ing] the implications of the hyperbolic praise, as one of a more suspicious nature might do" (150).

Good and Evil. Eve has no cause to suspect the Serpent; she is described by the narrator as "much marvelling' (IX.551), "Not unamaz'd" (IX.552), "Yet more amaz'd unwary" (IX.614), and now as "credulous" (IX.644). She does not detect any internal discrepancies in his story and she has no prior experience of deceit, "For neither Man nor Angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible" (III.682-684). Nor does the Serpent resemble the rebel angel of Raphael's warning: he is friendly towards Eve and seems selflessly eager to share the illuminating fruit with her. The Satan Eve has heard Raphael speak of is uncharitably proud, and filled with hatred for God and Man. Moreover, the Serpent does not look like a dissident angel; he is a beast. It is not until the Serpent stops before the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that Eve realises that he has been talking about the forbidden fruit. She immediately stops her inquiries, saying "Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither, / Fruitless to me, though Fruit be here to excess" (IX.647-648). She cites God's prohibition as explanation. But the Serpent's account of this fruit does not directly contradict what Eve has learnt of it before now, and she continues to accept the Serpent's identity and his claim that the fruit gave him reason. Satan abuses the trust he has gained, impairing Eve's reason and altering her self-understanding in his attempt to undermine her intention to observe God's prohibition.

Satan begins this assault by asking for clarification about the nature of God's prohibition, suggesting inconsistency between Eve's and Adam's authority in Eden and their restriction by this law: "Of all these Garden Trees ye shall not eat, / Yet Lords declar'd of all in Earth and Air?" (IX.657-658). His deliberate error prompts Eve to amend "all these Garden Trees" to "of the Fruit of this fair

Tree" (IX.661). Eve makes his point for him; although she and Adam have been "Lords declar'd of all in Earth or Air", they cannot eat of this one tree. This restriction seems inconsistent with their authority in Eden. Now Satan bombards Eve with many different lines of argument, all bound by one consistent theme: encouragement to feel dissatisfaction. While his earlier flattery failed to alter Eve's self-concept, this appeals to her already offended sense of merit. Feigning concern for her welfare, Satan introduces to Eve the idea that she is not receiving the recognition her beauty and intellect justify, and that she deserves a higher place in the divine order. The forbidden fruit is a way of accessing both her greater and as yet unrealised potential, and her rightful place in Creation. Then the Serpent questions the justness of the prohibition; why Man should be denied access to this enlightenment, and more specifically, why Man should be restricted from eating what the inferior beasts may eat freely. He implies that the knowledge intrinsic in the forbidden fruit will allow Eve to appreciate God's justice more effectively, and that God could not lawfully punish Eve for trying to comprehend evil so that she can more accurately recognise it to reject it. From this the Serpent develops the idea that God's prohibition is based on his jealous desire to prevent Man from rivalling him:

> Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
> Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
> His worshippers; he knows that in the day
> Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
> Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
> Op'n'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as Gods,
> Knowing both Good and Evil as they know (IX.703-709).

Death becomes the process of transition from Man to god, making it a positive thing, rather than something to be avoided. Then Satan takes advantage of Eve's limited creaturely knowledge to question the merits of God's superiority over Man. He asserts that the only real superiority gods have over Man is their earlier existence, which allows them to pretend to Man that they are the source of all that followed. Here Satan deliberately replaces "God" with "gods", subtly introducing the concept of polytheism to Eve to allow for the possibility that she can become a god alongside God. Over and over, Satan questions the justice of God's prohibition, and affirms as righteous the desire to advance in status and knowledge, which he claims are the benefits of breaking the prohibition. Satan cunningly concludes his address with an assertion that Eve needs to improve her knowledge so that she can consider these issues properly.

The Serpent's assertions that the prohibition is unjust and oppressive appeal to Eve because they correspond with her feelings that she has been unfairly judged and underestimated by Adam. Eve knows that by respecting this one rule she proves her obedience, love, and faith to God, but she accepts the blasphemous statements embedded in the Serpent's professed concerns, incorporating them into her understanding of herself. She no longer thinks of compliance with God's law as a way of preserving her happiness; in Eve's mind the prohibition has become an obstruction to her potential happiness. Her impiety frees her to question the divine motives for imposing the prohibition: "what forbids he [God] but to know, / Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise? / Such prohibitions bind not" (IX.758-760). Having deceived herself that God prevents her from realising her true potential by prohibiting her from eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,

Eve allows this potential to become a priority that rivals her obedience to God. Eve now thinks of the forbidden fruit as a way for her to possess the knowledge and power that have been unlawfully withheld from her: "Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine, / ... / Of virtue to make wise" (IX.776, 778). Rejecting her hitherto appropriate appreciation for God, Eve re-adjusts her self-perception, basing it on an over-inflated idea of her own potential and a strong sense that she deserves more than she has been allocated. Eve alters her perception of the situation to accommodate her desire to eat the forbidden fruit and simultaneously release herself from God's oppression and amend Adam's estimation of her: "What fear I then, rather what know to fear / Under this ignorance of Good and Evil, / Of God or Death, of Law or Penalty?" (IX.773-775). As she explores the Serpent's claim that the prohibition is unjust, Eve demonstrates convoluted reasoning that resembles Satan's false logic: "For good unknown, sure is not had, or had / And yet unknown, is as not had at all" (IX.756-757). The serpent-like turns Eve makes in her argument also "ma[ke] intricate seem straight" (IX.632), indicating that she is turning away from what she knows to be true in favour of her changing self-perception. By the conclusion of this speech, Eve has distorted her values to such an extent that she can justify disobedience as "the Cure of all [her ignorance]" (IX.776); only by eating may she understand why she should not eat. She assesses her intellectual refinement as a higher priority than the obedience she owes to God, and so wilfully misinterprets the concept of threefold happiness to pursue knowledge for its own sake rather than as a means to further her appreciation of her Maker. With this self-deception Eve prepares herself for an action she knows is wrong. We see Adam do this immediately before he commits

himself to sin; like Eve, Adam distorts his values to justify disobedience.[8] Developing an inaccurate self-knowledge allows Eve to pretend to herself that her desire to breach God's prohibition is reasonable, and she then commits herself to this desire by disobeying God's law and eating the fruit.

Contrary to appraisals of Eve's fall such as Waldock's, that it is "a sequence" or "a train of events" (30), it becomes apparent through close textual reading that Eve's decision to disobey God is sudden, resulting from a relatively late change in her self-perception. Eve is repelled by the idea of disobedience until hearing the Serpent's third speech, in which he represents God's law as oppressive. Although her eventual fall is strongly encouraged by Satan, Eve is responsible for her actions because, as she herself explained to Adam, she is sufficient to stand. Prior to her meeting the Serpent, Eve demonstrates an accurate understanding of herself, Creation, and God. Eve develops the self-knowledge first described to her by Adam, and later advocated by Raphael. By the time Eve accepts Adam's advances, she has already shown interest in learning about herself and her environment; her first actions are to inquire about her identity and attempt to establish a connection with her image because she believes it is another being. In accepting Adam, Eve also accepts his explanation of her existence and her place in the divine order. Adam tells Eve about God, and about how to maintain a relationship with him. Eve easily comprehends the concept of threefold happiness described by Raphael; she already recognises that she is happy, attributes her happiness to God, and acts to preserve her happiness by obeying God and exploring her place in Creation. Rather than weakening her resolve to remain

[8] See previous chapter (99-101).

obedient to God, the dream Satan whispers to Eve reinforces this intention. The doubts Adam expresses about her capacity and will to resist sin while away from him challenge first Eve's knowledge of herself, and then her faith in him. When Eve eventually sets off, she leaves with her husband's consent, but in the belief that he underestimates her. Furthermore, during this debate Eve witnesses Adam, the primary source for her self-understanding, reasoning inconsistently, arguing invalidly, and demonstrating an inaccurate grasp of the relationships between freedom, obedience and God's prohibition. Now Eve meets the Serpent who, by speaking and reasoning, is an anomaly that she cannot account for in terms of her knowledge of the divine order. The appearance of an articulate Serpent threatens her knowledge of Creation, but does not affect her faith in God or alter her self-perception. Satan's temptation inspires in Eve neither a change in the way she thinks about herself nor a will to break God's law, until he claims she has been forbidden things she deserves. This thesis of injustice compounds with Eve's previous inference that Adam underestimates her. Eve alters her self-perception, now believing that she is not as happy in Eden as she could be, and that she deserves a higher position in the divine order. Eve is motivated to break God's law because of radical changes in the way she understands herself, her place in Creation, and her relationship with God. Regarding the forbidden fruit as both the symbol of, and the cure for, her oppression, Eve eats, also "[a]gainst [her] better knowledge" (IX.998), although "much deceiv'd" (IX.404).

Works Cited

Primary Texts

Aquinas, Saint Thomas. *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Trans. by the Fathers of the Dominican Province. Vol. 1. New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc. 1946.

The Holy Bible. Authorised King James Version. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited, 1968.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Dr Faustus*. Ed. Roma Gill. 2nded. London: A&C Black, 1989.

Milton, John. *The Christian Doctrine*. *The Students' Milton*. Ed. Frank Allen Patterson. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc, 1933.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. London: Penguin Books, 1968.

Secondary Texts

Bell, Millicent. "The Fallacy of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*". *PMLA*. 68. (1953): 863-883.

Belsey, Catherine. *John Milton: Language, Gender, Power*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988.

Benet, Diane. "'No Outward Aid Require': A Note on Eve in the Separation Scene". *ANQ*. 2. (1989): 90-94.

Blackburn, Thomas H. "'Uncloister'd Virtue': Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise". *Milton Studies*. 3. (1971): 119-137.

Broadbent, J. B. *Some Graver Subject: An Essay on Paradise Lost*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1960.

Carey, John. "Milton's Satan". *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*. Ed. Dennis Danielson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 160-174.

Coleman, Henry Peter. *Man in Devil's Guise: Satan's Exceptional Humanity in Milton's Paradise Lost*. MA Thesis. Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1998.

Earl, James W. "Eve's Narcissism". *Milton Quarterly*. 19. (1985): 13-16.

Empson, William. *Milton's God*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1961.

Farwell, Marilyn R. "The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny". *Milton Studies*. 16. (1982): 3-20.

Fields, Albert W. "Milton and Self-Knowledge". *PMLA*. 83. (1968). 392-399.

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997.

Frye Northrop. *Five Essays on Milton's Epics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

Gross, Barry Edward. "Free Love and Free Will in *Paradise Lost*". *Studies in English Literature*. 7. (1967): 95-106.

Grossman, Marshall. *"Authors to Themselves": Milton and the Revelation of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Hunter, William B. "Eve's Demonic Dream". *ELH*. 13. (1946): 255-265.

Jacobus, Lee A. *Sudden Apprehension: Aspects of Self-Knowledge in Paradise Lost*. The Hague: Mouton, 1976.

Kelley, Maurice. *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana as a Gloss upon Paradise Lost*. Princeton Studies in English, XXII. Princeton: New Jersey, 1941.

Leonard, John. "'Once Fawn'd and Cring'd': A Song and Dance About Satan's Servility". *Milton Quarterly*. 19. (1985): 101-105.

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. "Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden". *New Essays on Paradise Lost*. Ed. Thomas Kranidas. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969. 86-117.

Lewis, CS. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

MacCallum, Hugh. "'Most Perfect Hero': The Role of the Son in Milton's Theodicy". *Paradise Lost: A Tercentenary Tribute*. Ed. Balachandra Rajan. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969. 79-105.

McColley, Diane Kelsey. "Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*". *Studies In English Literature*. 12. (1972): 103-120.

Musacchio, George. *Milton's Adam and Eve: Fallible Perfection*. Series IV. English Language and Literature, Vol. 118. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

van Nuis, Hermine J. "Animated Eve Confronting Her Animus: A Jungian Approach to the Division of Labour Debate in *Paradise Lost*". *Milton Quarterly*. 34. (2000): 48-56.

Ogden, H V S. "The Crisis of *Paradise Lost* Reconsidered". *Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Arthur E. Barker. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. 308-327.

Peter, John D. *A Critique of Paradise Lost*. New York: Columbia, 1960.

Reichert, John. "'Against his Better Knowledge': A Case for Adam". *ELH*. Vol. 48. John Hopkins University Press, 1981. 83-109.

Reifelhoess, Paul. "Milton's Pronominal Mating Dance: *Paradise Lost* 3.372-415". *Milton Quarterly*. 29. (1995): 106-111.

Revard, Stella Purce. *The War in Heaven: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion.* Ithaka: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Summers, Joseph H. *The Muse's Method: An Introduction to Paradise Lost*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.

Tillyard, E M W. *Milton*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1951.

Waldock, A.J.A. *Paradise Lost and Its Critics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947.